

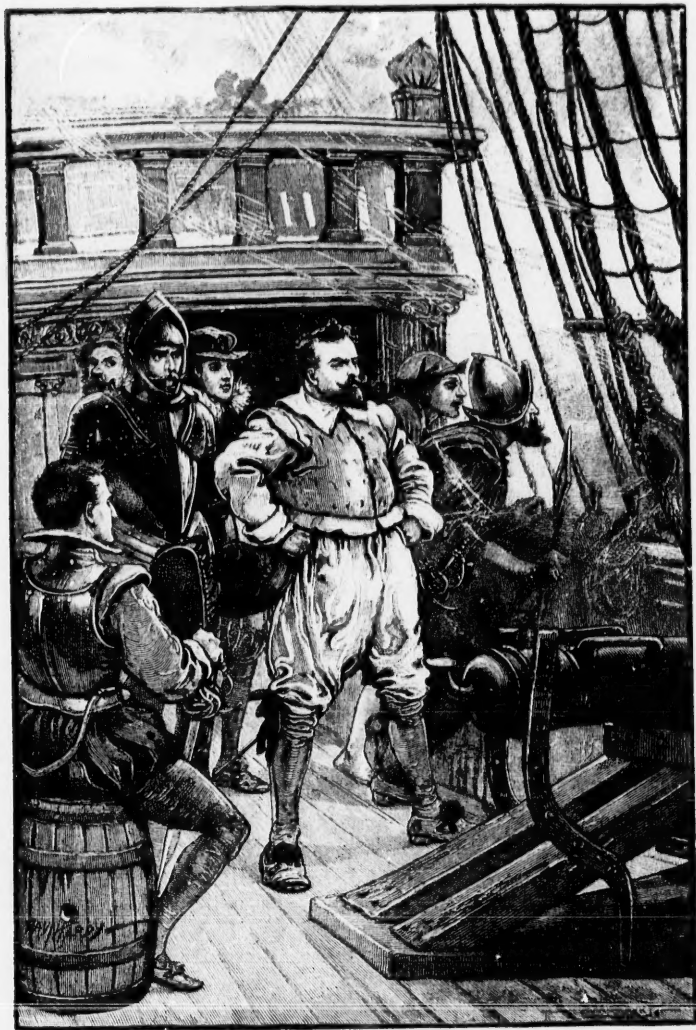


OUT WITH  
THE  
OLD VOYAGERS









DRAKE IN PURSUIT OF THE TREASURE-SHIP.

*Frontispiece.*

[See page 162.]

# OUT WITH THE OLD VOYAGERS

BY

HORACE G. GROSER

AUTHOR OF "ATLANTIS, AND OTHER POEMS"

"And they go long days tossing up and down  
Over the grey sea ridges, and the glimpse  
Of port they had makes bitterer far their toil."

MATTHEW ARNOLD

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## OUT WITH THE OLD VOYAGERS

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### INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER



THE earliest stories of sea-travel reach back to a remote past; to a time when there was no clear dividing line between fact and fiction. What was meant to be believed was often the wildest romance, and what reads to us like a fairy tale often contains much that was true.

The story of the Argonauts is one of the oldest of these. Greek boys loved to hear of the quest which sent this crew of heroes rowing across the seas, through cloud and sunshine, to strange, far-off shores and cities; and English boys, since Charles Kingsley retold the story for them, have loved it too. To what extent the story was based on an actual voyage, we cannot tell.



As we look backward down the ages, everything grows more and more misty the farther our sight travels. It is difficult to tell where the solid ground of fact ends and the cloud-line begins. Beyond the eighth or ninth century B.C., everything we should like to know about the "old voyagers" is indistinct and uncertain.

The bold sea-traders of Phœnicia—the little strip of coast with "cedared Lebanon" at its back—were early afloat. At that point, where their national history touches the history of the Jews, we have interesting references to them by a Jewish writer. In the First Book of Kings we read that Solomon "had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram." If we may identify Tharshish with Carthage, which city was a Phœnician colony, this would mean that Solomon employed the ships and sailors of a sea-going nation to do his carrying trade; his own Jewish subjects being home-keeping landmen, in spite of their long sea-front. The hired Carthaginian ships formed a contingent of the fleet sent out every three years by Hiram, King of Tyre. Their chief resort was Ophir, which some say was in Africa, while others show good reason to believe it was the Malabar coast of India. "Once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory (elephants' teeth), apes, and peacocks." A previous

passage also tells us that "the navy of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of alnug trees (sandal-wood?) and precious stones."

But the Phœnicians were not men to be content with one trade-route. The deep sea which hemmed in other peoples like a prison wall was for them a highway. They sailed out westward along the shores of North Africa, and planted colonies there at different points. Carthage, on the Gulf of Tunis, and Cadiz, in Spain, were both founded by them. When we think of the distance (reckoned by time) between the latter place, and the bustling seaport in North Palestine whence they had come,—*i.e.* the entire length of the Mediterranean,—we begin heartily to admire their daring. But they did more. From this outlying western settlement of Cadiz they pushed their discoveries northward to our own Cornwall and the Scilly Isles, and southward round the west coast of what is now Morocco.

There is also record of a wonderful three years' voyage made by Phœnician sailors, by order of the Egyptian king Pharaoh Necho, about 600 B.C. They are said to have sailed right round the African continent, starting from the Red Sea, doubling the Cape, touching at Cadiz, and so by the Mediterranean reaching the delta of the Nile.

To the Phœnicians, as we have said, belongs the honour of being the first to trace the coast-line of North Africa. About the same time, or rather later, a branch of the Greek race, the Ionians of Phokæa, were showing themselves almost as able and intrepid. Their swift fifty-oared galleys were becoming quite a familiar sight on the coasts of the Adriatic, and the pirates, lying in wait for the timid, clumsy merchantman, let the sharp-beaked Ionian trader pass on her way. The earliest knowledge of the irregular northern coast-line of the Mediterranean is certainly due largely to these adventurous Phokæans. They reached at last the southern shores of France, and the city of Marseilles owes its rise to them. Soon the furrows ploughed by Phœnician ships began to be crossed and recrossed by Greek voyagers. Into many a harbour of the Levant, and across many a dangerous strip of sea, the mariners of Tyre and Sidon saw with annoyance

“ . . . the merry Grecian coaster come,  
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,  
Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine—  
And knew the intruders on their ancient home.”

As the Phœnicians of Cadiz widened for themselves the limits of trade, and carried Tyrian speech, and Tyrian money and wares, yet farther afield and across

seas yet more remote, so did the Phœnicians of Carthage make exploring cruises on their own account. The record of Hanno's voyage down the west coast of Africa, as far perhaps as Sierra Leone, is one of the most interesting fragments of ancient history. The shipmen seem to have been much alarmed at certain sights along the coast. The warlike natives frightened them with their huge bonfires and the din of their drums and tom-toms. Plenty of crocodiles were seen, and hippopotami wallowing in the river-reeds; and an entertaining account is given of the attempted capture of gorillas, and of how the fierce, hairy brutes fled to the steep rocks and hurled down stones at their pursuers. The expedition took place about the year 520 B.C.

Just two centuries later, we find a Phokæan navigator sailing out through the Straits of Gibraltar and making his way to our own obscure island, which he not only rounded in safety, but held on his course till new shores were sighted. Probably these were the Shetlands, but very vague ideas prevailed about the new "island," which was eventually called *Ultima Thule*, and became a proverbial phrase for something very far north, something very far away "at the edge of the world."

Had Alexander of Macedon lived longer, we should most likely have had some big exploring trips to

record. His maritime general, Nearchus, an islander from Crete, had already pleased the young hero by making a voyage from the Indus round to the mouth of the Euphrates, at the head of the Persian Gulf. More ambitious plans would no doubt have been put in action, but the touch of fever that laid low Alexander stayed alike the tide of Greek conquest in Asia and the work of his fleets upon the seas.

Alexander's generals, Seleucus, Antiochus, and Ptolemy, on their attaining to royal positions of their own, each patronised nautical research.

The Ptolemies, who ruled Egypt, specially deserve credit. They sent out "navies" every year from their Red Sea ports to Arabia, and to places on the coasts of Africa and India. They were the patrons of Eratosthenes (276-196 B.C.), who is famous as being the first to make geography a science, and to construct out of a medley of loose facts an orderly system. It was already recognised that the earth must be a globe, and not, as was formerly believed, a flat surface; and Eratosthenes set himself to mark out the relative position of the various countries, and the proportion of space they really occupied. Nothing is more amusing, in looking at ancient maps of the world, than to see the wrong sizes attributed to certain countries—much after the style of the first outline map drawn by boys at school.

Hipparchus (160-135 B.C.) mapped out the starry heavens, on which the sailor so long had to rely for his knowledge of distance and direction.

This brings us down to Roman times. But the Romans, except as their conquests demanded, did little to increase the knowledge of unknown shores and seas. Agricola, while in Scotland, A.D. 78, fighting the fierce tribes along the Grampians, directed his ships, which followed him as he moved northward, to find out how far our island coasts extended. Cæsar had *believed* Britain to be an island; Agricola's sailors *proved* it to be such. They furthermore sighted the Orkneys and Shetlands; and their comrades on shore in Galloway stared across the grey sea at the dim coast-line of Ireland which the legions had never reached.

From the days of Roman rule we come to the time when the disciples and successors of Mahomet in Arabia started on their long career of conquest, which took them eventually as far westward as Spain. Here a Moorish (Arab) kingdom long survived, with Cordova as its centre, and the splendid towers and temples of the invaders are still among the art-glories of that country.

The home-centre of the race was at Bagdad—a name familiar from childhood to every reader of the *Arabian Nights*. Here the science of geography, with many other sciences, was studied by men of learning and

astuteness. Arab travellers began to win a name for themselves. Some of their writings and records have come down to us. The earliest is that of the merchant Sulaiman, who, starting from the Persian Gulf, made several voyages to India and China, about the middle of the ninth century, A.D. To the same period belongs the story of *Sinbad the Sailor*, which we have been perhaps too ready to regard as pure romance. Probably there is a substratum of fact even in such fictions as the valley of diamonds, and the enormous roc, and the huge serpents; as there certainly is in the episode of the cannibals and of the custom of living burial. As for the killing of the one-eyed geni, that incident is obviously an Eastern version of the old Greek story of Ulysses and Polyphemus.

While the slant sails of Arab voyagers were skimming over the blue waters of the Indian Ocean, the less sunny seas of the north were being explored by a hardier and more daring race. The Norsemen were the boldest of all the navigators of the ancient world. We can gauge their spirit from their songs or sagas. We can judge of their fierce rapacity from the terror they inspired in every coast town. "Sea wolves" they called themselves. Sea eagles they were, rather; red, indeed, beak and talon, with the blood of the slain, but splendid in their audacity of flight. No leaping billows

ever scared them from their quest. Their spirit rose with the tempest, for the salt was in their veins, and the turbulence of the storm was in their hearts. A poor soil drove them from their farmsteads by crowds to seek a living with the sword, and they sailed to neighbouring coasts and ran up inland on the river-tides, and came home again with galleys treasure-laden.

But the Norsemen were not all Vikings and marauders. Some fought only with the winds and waves, and traded peacefully enough. Our own King Alfred employed or encouraged certain of them to bring him accounts of outlying regions. One penetrated up the Baltic; another, Othere, went northward and eastward past the North Cape to Lapland and the White Sea.

"Othere, the old sea captain,  
Who dwelt in Helgoland,  
To King Alfred, the Lover of Truth,  
Brought a snow-white walrus tooth,  
Which he held in his brown right hand."

And Longfellow tells, in his ballad, how the king wrote down the old Norseman's story, with its strange tale of the midnight sun, and the chase of seal and whale in "a nameless sea."

About the end of the ninth century men of Norse blood colonised Iceland. In 877 they sighted Greenland, which was so named by Erik the Red a century



later. He deliberately selected what he thought would be an enticing name, and persuaded some of his Icelandic countrymen to make a home there. In the year 989, Bjorni, son of one of Erik's comrades, set sail from Iceland to join his father in Greenland, but he made too southerly a course, and came upon a new country. It was the coast-line of what are now the New England States. Virtually, therefore, the young Viking was the discoverer of America. He steered northward at once, coasting along Connecticut, Massachusetts, and so by Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, round to Greenland and the spot where his father was awaiting him.

Fired by his story, Leif, a son of Red Erik, bought Bjorni's ship and sailed away, with a crew of five and twenty men, in quest of new lands. The bleak snow-plains of what seems to have been Labrador were first reached. Passing on they came to another coast, low, level, and wooded, which they named Markland (Woodland). Thence a north-easterly wind bore them in two days to a river-mouth where they moored their galley, and on the banks they set up their winter camp. Where this spot was it is difficult to say exactly, for the climate has evidently grown colder during the last thousand years, but it must have been pretty far south, for the voyagers revelled in the pleasantness even of the winter season, during which no frosts whitened the

green grass. Huge salmon were broiled at the camp fire, and the foraging parties brought in arm-loads of wild vines, in which the country abounded. Indeed from this it received its name of Vinland, a name that occurs frequently in Norse song and story, and which must have had a delightful suggestiveness to the dwellers on the rugged fields and by the lonely fjords at home in Norrøway.

The discoverer of Vinland had a brother, Thorwald, who was envious and eager to outdo Leif's exploit. He took thirty men and sailed to the new country. There, with his brother's old camp as headquarters and base, he made exploring trips right and left. Then he pushed northward and eastward, and fell in with the Eskimo. One day, drowsy with the cold, the Norsemen were nodding and dreaming in their ship when, says the saga, "a sudden scream came to them, and a countless host from up the creek came in skin boats, and laid themselves alongside." With ranged shields the voyagers warded off the arrows that came hurtling from the *kayaks*, until the shower ceased and the attacking horde drew off. But at least one of their number, and that no less a man than Thorwald their leader had been struck down by a dart, and his men carried him ashore and buried him at a pleasant spot which he had pointed out as fit for sojourning. And there, as the old chronicle says with sad humour, he did sojourn, but

with a cross at his feet and at his head. When the spring came his men sailed home to Greenland.

The most famous, however, of the voyagers to Vinland was Thörfinn Karlsefne, who, coming from Norway to Greenland, about 1005, led a colonising expedition to the much talked of new country. There went 160 men, in three ships, and five women had the courage to go too. They found Leif's settlement, and were delighted with the place. They felled the forests, pastured the cattle they had brought with them, and gathered the wild grapes. The Eskimo, ever thievish and inquisitive, pestered the settlers, and a palisade had to be put up round the circle of huts. Eventually a serious affray took place, which ended in the natives being worsted and dispersing into the woods. The settlement was abandoned in about two years, the ships returning laden with furs and timber to Greenland. This seems to have been the last vigorous attempt to establish a colony in Vinland. The cause of failure lay chiefly in the fact that the colony was too far off to be easily succoured and supported.

The Norse settlements in Greenland long survived. The famous voyagers, Nicolo and Antonio Zeno, two Venetian brothers, employed by Henry Sinclair, Lord of the Orkneys, make reference to them, and Antonio is known to have actually visited Greenland. The colonies were blotted out by a savage raid of the

natives, about the year 1418; this catastrophe was no doubt the outcome of long years of jealousy and resentment of the intruders.

The Crusades naturally drew the attention of Europe to Oriental affairs, and the interest did not die out when this series of "holy wars" came to an end. Among the travellers of the period one name stands out pre-eminent—that of Marco Polo. His were chiefly land travels, but his valuable contribution to the geographical knowledge of the day must not be passed over here. He journeyed as far as China, and was for seventeen years in the service of the Grand Khan.

A less familiar figure is that of the indefatigable Arab traveller, Ibn Batuta. He was born at Tangier in 1304, and died in 1377. His wanderings were far and wide, by land and sea, in Africa and through great tracts of Asia. He is computed to have covered 75,000 miles, a wonderful record for those days of slow journeying. He was absent from home for twenty-four years, and after settling down for less than three years, he was off once more.

Italian names then begin to shine out from the page of history, as the makers of important exploring trips. Those of Nicolo Conti through Persia and China, and the islands of the Indian Sea, occupied twenty-five years; he returned to Venice in 1444. The name of

Ludovico de Varthema also deserves mention, as a five years' wanderer in the Far East.

The mariner's compass is claimed by the Chinese as one of their inventions, but in the hands of enterprising Europeans its use made little less than a revolution in nautical affairs. It opened out splendid possibilities to the explorer. The old cautious, coast-hugging voyager, with his dependence on landmarks, and his utter dread of the vast sea solitudes, became a creature of the past. To Flavio Gioja, an Italian, living at Amalfi, we are said to owe this inestimable gift; the date of its introduction was about 1307.

Portugal was destined to take the lead in the new era of discovery which was at hand, but sailors of other nations—Italian, French, and English—were before the Portuguese. The first of these three showed themselves vigorous pioneers. As far back as 1270—about the time that our own Prince Edward was fighting gallant but useless battles in Palestine against the irresistible Moslem power—the Italian, Lancelot Malocello, re-discovered the Canary Islands, and a few years later the ships of Genoa ventured down the Barbary coast beyond the furthest point then known. In 1341 the Canaries were again visited, by a mixed crew of Portuguese and Italians from Lisbon. Probably about this time European traders got scent of the good things to be had by pushing south to the Gulf of Guinea, and

bartering with the natives of the Gold Coast; but, naturally, no accounts of such stealthy trips would be published by those who planned them. It was to their interest to say nothing, and let people continue to think that only perilous seas awaited the sailor who attempted to push southward.

The share which England had in these discoveries on the West Coast of Africa was quite an accidental one. The story is one of the most romantic conceivable.

A young Englishman, named Robert Machin, courted and won the affections of a lady who was of much higher rank than his own. Her friends haughtily refused their consent to the union, succeeded in getting the youth put under arrest, and as speedily as possible arranged a marriage between the young lady and Lord d'Arfet. The latter took his bride to Bristol, and thither as soon as he was set free, the indignant lover secretly made his way. He engaged a ship from the many lying in that busy port, and sent a boat up the Avon with a message to his sweetheart. She effected her escape from the lordly home which she hated, was borne swiftly and safely down the river, and taken on board the ship. Joyful was the meeting of the long-separated pair; and when the wind filled the broad sails, and the Severn mouth was left astern, it seemed as if all their troubles were over. But the pleasant land of France where they had intended to settle down, was

never to be trodden by them. A north-east gale carried them southward and westward, day after day, until there was nothing but sea all round them, and the pilot had to admit that he had lost his bearings. On the fourteenth day a faint coast-line was sighted. It proved to be a verdant and beautiful island. The lovers and their friends went ashore in the ship's boat, and roamed delightedly among the green valleys, admiring the birds and bright insects, the fronds of the great ferns, and the innumerable flowers.

To them, after the discomforts of the stormy seas, it was like Paradise. They built themselves bowers of woven boughs, and prepared for a sojourn of several days. But a renewal of the tempest tore the ship from her moorings, and swept her out of sight. To the fugitives and such of the crew as happened to be on shore at the time, it was a terrible blow. Their last link with the outer world was gone. The lady, weakened and overwrought with all she had suffered in that dreadful voyage, died of the shock. Her disconsolate lover survived her but a few days, and the ill-fated pair were laid side by side to rest. The remainder of the party, having got across in the boat to the African mainland, were seized and sold as slaves in Barbary. They told their story to a fellow-captive, an old sea-dog from Seville. This man being ransomed and sent home was intercepted by Zarco,

a captain in the service of Prince Henry of Portugal. And so it came about that the story of the English lovers and the new island reached the ears of the Navigator Prince. How he made use of the news will be seen in a subsequent chapter.

The massacre of a band of Christian settlers in the Canary Islands prompted certain French adventurers, notably Jean de Béthencourt, to attempt the conquest of these islands. The enterprise was for the most part successful, and the Frenchmen established several colonies. But their wish to explore the African coast does not appear to have carried them further south than Cape Bojador.

It seemed as if the world was waiting for a man to arise, having the imagination to conceive, the brain to plan, and the means to organise, definite voyages of discovery, using, indeed, the knowledge collected by previous seafarers, but setting to work in a more systematic manner. And in Prince Henry of Portugal such a man was found.





## PRINCE HENRY OF PORTUGAL

1394-1460



English who use, more than any other nation, the sea-paths of the world, should be proud to remember that the wise prince who helped so largely to trace those paths was himself "half an Englishman."

His father, King John I., had married Philippa, the daughter of "old John of Gaunt," son of our Edward III. To the wise training and fostering care of this mother her sons owed much. Five noble young fellows they were—Edward the Eloquent, Pedro the Great Regent, Henry the Navigator, John the Constable, and Ferdinand the Saint; and of these five, none did more than the Navigator to help Portugal in her expansion from a little free state to a colonising power. His father's sword had given her independence from Spanish rule; the son's pen planned for her a dominion beyond the seas.

Henry was both student and man of action, a dreamer of dreams, which he himself helped to fulfil. At the age of twenty-one he had fought like a hero in the desperate hand-to-hand encounters before the gates and within the walls of Ceuta, the chief port of Morocco, when his father had led a crusading expedition against this nest of Paynims and Barbary corsairs. The Christians succeeded in capturing the city, and the spoil was immense.

Prince Henry, who had won the chief honours of the great fight, remained for some time at Ceuta. There was work for him to do, but he was also interested in certain facts which some of his Moorish prisoners had disclosed. He learned that there was a constant coming and going of caravans from the coasts of Tunis across the desert sands of the interior to Timbuctoo, and to Cantor on the Gambia River. The Moors also told him of a landmark which should guide his ships to the Senegal River—a cluster of very tall palms, growing at the river mouth.

Now, to reach either of those two rivers by sea, would be to venture further round the great bend of the West African coast than vessels of that day had dared to go. Cape Bojador marked the limit of their journeyings.

What lay beyond the Cape? This was the question to which the Portuguese Prince set himself to find the answer.

## Prince Henry of Portugal

3

For the past four or five years, his mariners had been feeling their way cautiously along those sunny shores, and he now determined to achieve something of more importance. He went back to Portugal in 1418, refusing many a tempting invitation to courts and courtly gaieties, and settled down to live for forty years the life of a quiet student.



HENRY THE NAVIGATOR.  
(From an old Portuguese Print.)

On a lonely promontory looking out over the Atlantic, at what we now know as Cape St. Vincent (a name made glorious to us English by Nelson's great sea fight), the Prince built himself "a palace, a chapel, a study, an observatory—the earliest in Portugal—and

a village for his helpers and attendants." Here, to quote the words of Mr. Raymond Beazley, the Prince's most recent biographer, "though he became a recluse from the Court life of Lisbon, he soon gathered round himself a rival Court of science and seamanship." Learned men were invited to come and reside at Sagres as it was then called. The making of maps and the studying of maps went on ceaselessly. Every scrap of information that came from a reliable source was welcomed. The Prince's own brother Pedro was himself a great traveller, and he placed at Henry's disposal a store of collected facts and figures which was most valuable to him. Both Edward and Pedro, in turn, proved themselves staunch friends to their student brother, and saw to it that he was provided with means for carrying out his plans.

If Sagres was Henry's study, the port of Lagos was his workshop. There lay the stout ships that must undertake the voyages sketched out on the maps. To make good and accurate charts was the first thing, but the next and equally important task was the preparation of suitable vessels. That the sailor Prince worked equally hard at the latter, we have plenty of evidence, and Cadamosto, the famous Italian navigator of that day, bears generous testimony to the result. The caravels of Portugal, he says, are the best ships afloat.

The one great object of Prince Henry's life was to

enlarge the bounds of knowledge by exploring the wide untraversed seas, by tracing the coast-lines of great continents and distant islands, and by finding the ocean-paths that should hereafter link land to land.

It was natural that dwellers on the westernmost fringe of Southern Europe should look towards Africa and the South. And so at last it came about that to sail round the extremity of that vast continent, and somehow get across to India and China, grew to be the great idea of the age.

But the nearer seas had first to be explored. In 1418, John Gonsalvez Zarco, and Tristam Vaz, another member of the Sagres household, set out to reach and reconnoitre the Guinea Coast. They fell in with a freed captive from Barbary, Morales by name, a Seville pilot, and learned from him, as mentioned in a previous chapter, the romantic story of the English lovers and the discovery of Madeira. Guided by Morales, Zarco and his crew found the wooden cross and grave of the hapless pair, and the silence of that lonely spot was broken by Zarco's proclamation, as he formally took possession of the island in the name of God and the King.

He came again, in 1421, with honours and titles, to the beautiful island, bringing his wife and children and retainers, and to him the port of Machico (called after Robert Machin) and the city of Funchal (so named

from the ground being overgrown with *fennel*) owe their origin. Ships that came from Portugal bringing supplies went back freighted with corn and timber, and the curious red substance known as dragon's blood. Later on, the Madeira vineyards and sugar plantations began to be talked about. But an experiment made for "clearing" the ground further inland, by firing the outskirts of the woods, proved only too successful. The flames went on eating into the dense growth behind, in a way that defied any attempts to arrest them. Up the glorious ravines into the very heart of the mountains went the devouring fire, until the forest giants and gay festooning flowers alike shrivelled and blackened, and the wild blaze leaped up into the night sky lighting the ocean for miles around. It was called the "Seven Years' Fire," and the Prince's ships guided themselves by it as they steered southward towards the Guinea Coast.

Not a year passed but vessels sailed out from Sagres to reach that coast. Further than Cape Bojador, however, the mariners could not or would not go. It is easy for us, with our complete maps and magnificent steamships, to laugh at their hesitating reluctance. But if, in fancy, we substitute clumsy caravels for those fast ocean liners; blot out all West Africa south of, say, the Tropic of Cancer; write across the blank space "Sea of Darkness"; and people this unknown

region with monsters and terrors of all kinds,—we shall better understand the hesitation which they showed and the alarm which they felt.

This wide-spread fear was largely the fault of Moslem geographers. Excellent work was done by them, as we have already seen; but their influence on European voyagers was most mischievous. They invented and repeated the wildest fancies and superstitions about the unknown world. Our own Sir John Mandeville, who visited the East in the fourteenth century, invented a sufficient number of marvels, but few people believed his rambling statements. But these learned, serious, map-making Moslems of Bagdad and Cordova did convince the world that the terrors they described were real.

And so in addition to the ordinary perils of storm and rock and hunger, which had to be encountered, these early Portuguese mariners had visions of malignant water sprites and monstrous genii, ocean serpents and fire-breathing demons, magnetic islands and whirlpools that sucked into their vortex straws and great ships alike. One common belief was that any Christian who passed beyond Cape Bojador would turn into a black. Another was that Satan lay in wait on the further side, like an octopus behind a rock, ready to stretch out a clutching hand as soon as the first ship came round the headland. And these fearsome tales were believed



by bronzed captains as well as by idle loafers on the quays at home.

Just as many a child grows up timid and full of nervous fancies because in his early childhood he has been under the influence of some superstitious nurse who frightened him with stories of goblins that lurked in every dark corner, and ghosts that haunted every lonely place, so did the modern world in the days of its fresh vigorous youth find it hard to throw off the fears of its childhood. It still believed that "the Unknown" must necessarily be the terrible. Men talked then, as now, of "God's earth"; that was right and natural enough; but the ocean wildernesses, treacherous, changeful, mysterious, these surely had been left to the Prince of Darkness. Deliberately to penetrate those wildernesses meant, in plain words, to run beyond the reach of God.

Such was the kind of difficulty with which Prince Henry had to deal, and in the face of which he resolutely set himself to act. He appealed to the courage of his seamen, above all to their common-sense. He ridiculed the wild tales which they gravely repeated, and bade them go and show themselves intrepid voyagers and loyal servants. And loyally and intrepidly they went. Gil Eannes, in 1434, ran boldly south towards Cape Bojador, and in a wide curve doubled that forbidding headland. No storm-wind rushed down upon him; no flying demons settled upon

the shrouds; no awful hand rose up out of the sea depths to clutch and drag under the pigmy vessel. But instead, the men rowed ashore, and found a fair country, peaceful and quiet enough. They went hither and thither plucking the gay flowers, and as they paced

"the yellow sand,  
Where the blue wave creamed soft with fairy foam,"

they must have laughingly contrasted the placid beauty of the place with the terrible picture they had once conceived. They were pleased, and they were proud; and they had reason to be so. It was a most notable achievement. They had broken down the prejudice of centuries. It was the old story over again—the haunted house, which a little courage and decision had stripped of all its mysteries and terrors.

Prince Henry was delighted, as well he might be. The great obstacle was now removed. Henceforward, the work of discovery went steadily on. The next ship sent out ran past the Cape a hundred and fifty miles; the next, three hundred and ninety miles.

In this latter expedition two boys figured prominently. They were bold, spirited lads, of noble birth, eager for adventure and longing to do some doughty deed to please the Prince. They had heard that he wished to obtain one or more natives from these western regions, in order to question them concerning

the trade routes of the Arab merchants. They resolved to try and gratify his wish; and the way in which they set about their task is enough to win the heart of the most adventure-loving schoolboy of to-day. They obtained the use of a couple of horses brought in the ship, and, without troubling about armour, took lance and sword and rode inland. They went twenty miles, and then they sighted a band of natives. They were nineteen in number, but the two audacious boys couched their lances and rode boldly in upon them, caring nothing for the fierce looks and brandished spears. They tried to corner one or two of their opponents, and were seriously disappointed when the blacks fled to a place of vantage, whence there was no dislodging them. As daylight was failing, they rode back to the beach, much chagrined at having to return without a "specimen" of these outland tribes.

Between 1436 and 1441 little of importance was done in maritime exploration. Political changes and a crusading attack on the Moorish stronghold of Tangier—a disastrous failure though gallantly conducted—filled the sailor prince's thoughts. Indeed, the Tangier crusade was his own idea, and he came back well-nigh broken-hearted, for he and his men had fought like lions and had been defeated by sheer weight of numbers.

Ships sent out in 1441 brought back several natives

captured south of Cape Bojador. One of the ships under Nuno Tristam had gone as far as Cape Blanco, which was so named from the white, sandy hills that broke the dull level of the plains. But it was Antam Gonsalvez who brought home something which made every sea-going Portuguese as enthusiastic for the cause of Discovery as Prince Henry himself. *It was a handful of gold dust.*

To only a few great souls could the passion for knowledge appeal with sufficient force to make them dare much and sacrifice much; but noble and base minds alike could feel the magic spell of that other attraction. The glittering dust, traced at last to the Guinea Coast, served its purpose. It set men thinking of the gold of the Indies, and it stimulated them in their efforts to find the way thither.

In 1444, a fleet of six caravels manned exclusively by men of Lagos, Henry's near neighbours, sailed for the Coast of Guinea. Gold and, alas, *slaves* were the object. The cause of discovery was getting to be lost sight of, and precious years were wasted in mere raiding trips, which turned peaceful villages into smoking heaps, and laid up a store of vengeance which was wreaked upon later comers.

One expedition alone brought back two hundred and thirty blacks, who were sold by auction at Lagos. The massacres that attended such captures were deplorable.

It is pleasant, however, to find with what strange kindness these poor creatures were treated by their purchasers, many of the children being reared and educated by childless parents as if they had been sons and daughters. The picture is in welcome contrast to the fate of the negroes that hereafter were to toil and suffer on the American plantations.

An old sea-captain, Diniz Diaz by name, at last begged leave to trace the coast-line further than had been attempted yet. He reached a new headland, which, from its grassy and well-wooded slopes, he named Cape Verde.

In 1445 the popular feeling in Portugal showed itself in the fitting out of a fleet of no less than twenty-seven vessels, large and small, and among the list of officers we find the names of nearly all the famous voyagers already mentioned—Diniz Diaz, Zarco, Gil Eannes, Tristam Vaz, and others. The day of sailing was the 10th August. No very rich results accrued from the venture, though the previous murder of some of their countrymen was sharply avenged by a landing party.

Outrages and reprisals seem, indeed, to have become common enough by this time. The very next ship that went out, and which ran on past Cape Verde to the mouth of the Rio Grande, lost nineteen men. Her boat's crew was attacked by a fleet of war canoes, and

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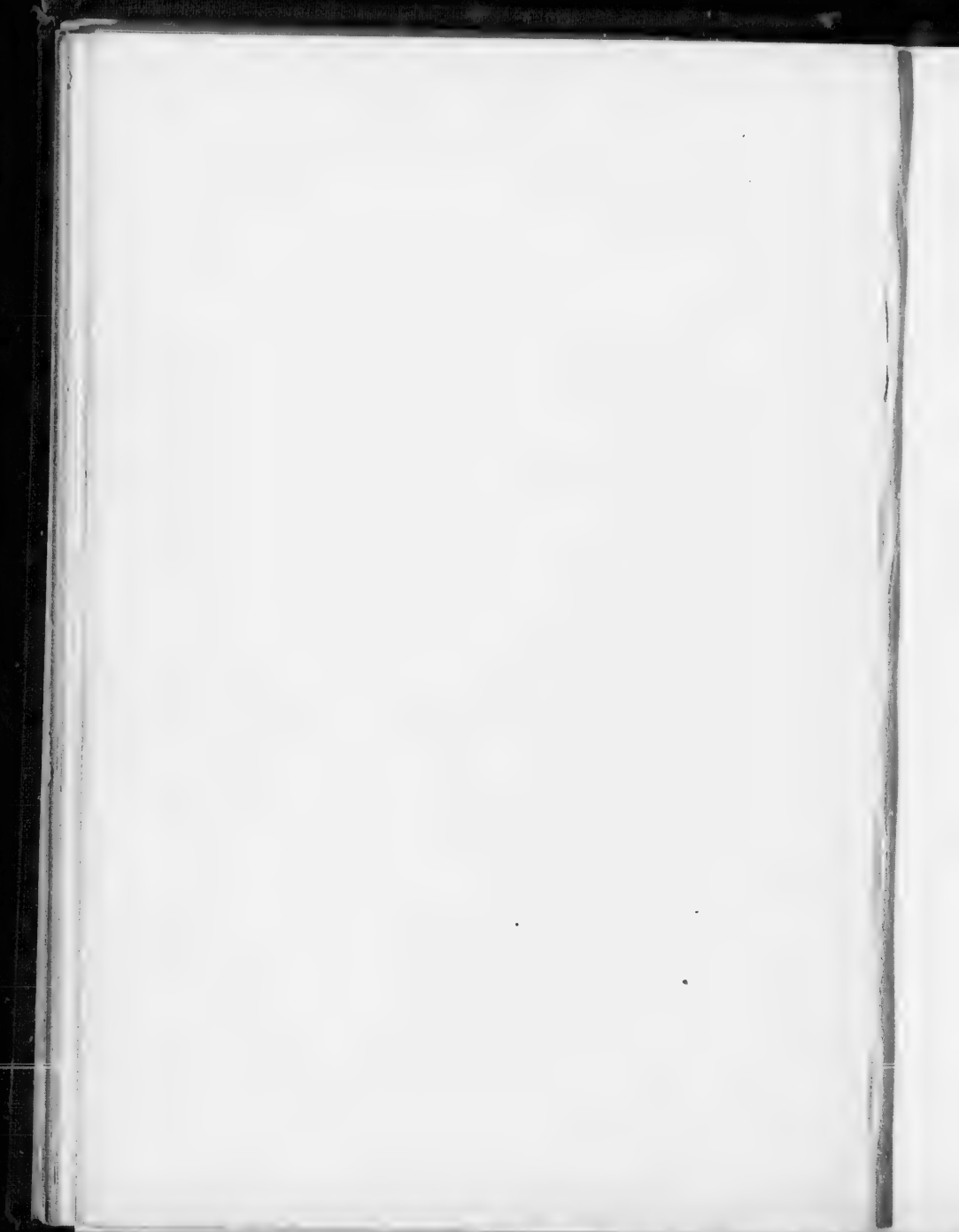
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PRINCE HENRY'S SHIPS REFRESHING TO LAGOS.





hardly a man escaped the horrible poisoned assegais. The captain, Nuno Tristam, himself was slain, and the caravel laden with dead and dying men was headed for home. Only five hands remained to work her, of whom three were mere boys. One of these, a brave little fellow, took upon himself the duties of helmsman, and for sixty days the helpless remnant of a smart crew drifted on the deep, miserable with grief and with fear of what new dangers each burning day or silent night might bring. Eventually they reached Lagos, and told their harrowing story to the Prince.

A ship commanded by Zarco's nephew, Alvaro Fernandez, had better luck, reaching, in 1446, what is now called Sierra Leone, and in the following year the Portuguese at home had the delight of staring at a real African lion—the first which had been brought over.

All these years Prince Henry's ships had been pushing further and further southward, while a group of islands was lying almost unknown away out in the Atlantic, in a direct line with Lisbon. These were the Azores, so named from the myriads of hawks which hovered over the islands, "so tame that they could be caught by the hand." Not until 1444 was St. Michael's, the isle of orange groves, discovered, and Terceira still later. Once found, the islands were



favourably regarded, and emigrants poured out to them from Portugal.

The achievements of the Venetian sea-captain, Cadamosto, in Prince Henry's employ, in 1455-6, made a great impression on the minds of the people of his day. His name shines out with special lustre in the long list of "Old Voyagers." The records he has left are most interesting reading, especially what he has to say about the ebony-skinned natives of the Senegambia Coast, and the caravans which came thither across the desert with their loads of precious things for barter; of the surprise of the negroes at the ships, firearms, trumpets, etc., of the visitors; of the exploring trip up the Gambia River, and the fights with the tribes that dwelt on the banks; and of the melancholy slave trade. Cadamosto made another voyage in the following year, as far south perhaps as Sierra Leone, and went ashore elephant hunting, and saw much to marvel at from time to time in the way of huge turtles and giant trees and so forth.

The last captain sent out by the wise Prince was Diego Gomez, who accomplished little, but brought back a goodly freight of gold, ivory, and pepper. He it was, however, who in a later voyage, about 1460, first sighted the Cape Verde Islands, and landed on one of them.

That same year Prince Henry fell sick, and in mid-

November Portugal was mourning the loss of the most glorious of her sons. Soldier, statesman, and student, he did more than perhaps any other royal patron before or after him to advance the cause of discovery on the seas. He was *a man* every inch of him, fearless and enthusiastic, clear-headed and pure-hearted, ready to spend himself and be spent in the great cause which he had so much at heart. He left the map of the world a very different thing to what he found it; for not only did his own ships trace the unknown West Coast of Africa, and dispel the mystery and terror which hung over it, but he carefully and intelligently collected and set forth the results of other men's travels and researches. Though he did not live to see what he so desired—the rounding of the African continent and the reaching of India—the first and most difficult part of that great undertaking was certainly accomplished by those who went out at his bidding.

And his work did not end with his death. He had set going a movement which saw at last the silks and spices of the Indies carried home to Europe independently of slow-paced camels and Arab traders. Ships of the west with the Cross on sail or pennon surprised the Moslem traffickers in the furthest islands of the Eastern seas. The old overland trade, by which Venice had grown rich, gave way to the new sea-borne

commerce, with Portugal as its chief agent. The caravel began to replace the caravan.

Eleven years after the Prince's death two Portuguese pilots, Martin Fernandez and Alvaro Esteves, traced the entire length of the Guinea Coast and crossed the Equator. In 1484 Diego Cam went further, and discovered the mouth of the great Congo River; and in his next year's voyage got actually as far as what is now Walfisch Bay, in the country of the Hottentots. Still there was no eastward trend in the coast, and Cam went home. If only he and his master King John had known how near was the goal, the great southernmost Cape, what burning excitement there would have been to finish the race! But the crowning exploit was near at hand.

The name of Diaz has occurred before in this chapter. John Diaz was the second voyager to pass the haunted headland of Cape Bojador, Diniz Diaz had added Cape Verde to the map, and now the third and most illustrious of the trio was about to crown the long series of southward sailings by a greater feat than all.

In August, 1486, Bartholomew Diaz steered for the Guinea Coast with two little fifty-ton "frigates." He reached and passed Walfisch Bay and the mouth of the Orange River, and then, because he felt certain that the continent could not stretch much further, he stood out to sea, and with a boldness which we cannot too

greatly admire, *he ran southward for thirteen days.* The wind was at his back, and the bitter cold told him he had gone far. The shrouds glittered with icicles, and the great rollers of the South Atlantic swept down upon the tiny vessels as if they must inevitably engulf them. League after league, dipping and rearing, with shortened sail and sloping decks, they held on their way. Finally Diaz turned eastward, and, after five days, felt it would be safe to steer northward. The great Cape was passed, though he knew it not. But land of some sort rose in sight at length, and at Algoa Bay, where now stands the busy English town of Port Elizabeth, Diaz went ashore.

Sixty miles further, at the Great Fish River, the crews protested against continuing the apparently fruitless journey, and Diaz had to yield. But as with heavy heart and despondent thoughts he retraced his course, away over the grey ridges of the sea upon his right rose the great promontory, telling of splendid effort rewarded and of success achieved.

Many a bark had crept down towards it, hoping to reach and round it. Many were the eyes that had desired to see it. Great sea-captains would have given their right hand to have had the proud honour of doubling that Cape; and what would not the Navigator Prince have given to have heard before he died the news he had waited for so long?

The exploit of Bartholomew Diaz ranks with that of Columbus and with that of Magellan. In its way it was greater than the more famous voyage of Vasco da Gama, for he merely completed what Diaz had begun, and King John's travellers had already sent home helpful information about the east coast route. One of them wrote thus: "Keep southward. If you persevere, the end of Africa *must* be reached. And when ships come to the Eastern Ocean (*i.e.* after getting round the extremity of Africa) let them ask for Sofala and the Island of the Moon (*i.e.* Madagascar), and they will find pilots to take them to Malabar"—a very clear and shrewd statement, which must have helped Da Gama considerably. Thus we see that knowledge of the West African Coast waited to join hands with knowledge of the East Coast. The deed of Bartholomew Diaz supplied the link which pieced together the two halves.

Every schoolboy knows the story of how Diaz returned with the glad news to his royal master, and told with what stress and difficulty he had rounded the promontory.

"We named it the Cape of Storms," said he.

"Nay, rather let it be called The Cape of Good Hope," suggested King John, "for now indeed have our ships fair prospect of reaching India."

## BY THE SEA-ROAD TO INDIA

THE VOYAGE OF VASCO DA GAMA

1497



HERE was great excitement outside the city of Lisbon. The citizens were gathered in crowds along the waterside, standing in knots and groups earnestly discussing some evidently important matter. Some, especially the aged, shook their heads and looked grave, others were sobbing. There did not seem light heart in all the throng.

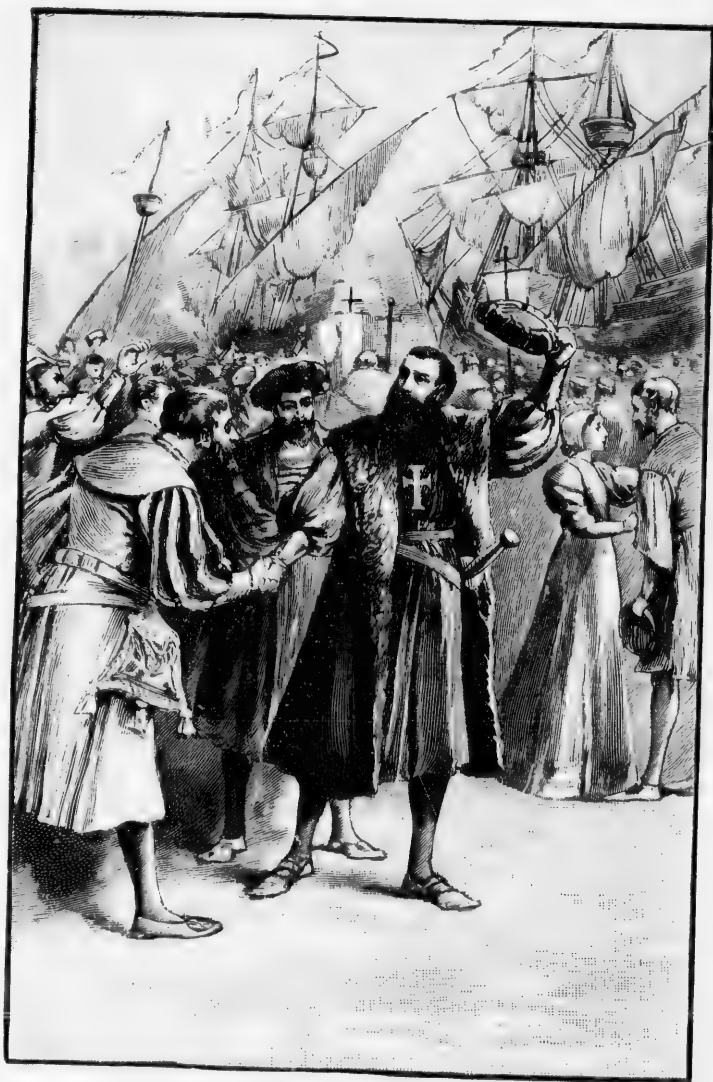
Not far off could be seen a little convent chapel that overlooked the estuary. Presently there issued from it a band of men, evidently mariners. The faces of these, too, wore a serious look; for they had been attending a solemn farewell service, and the words of the Latin prayers chanted by the sonorous voices of the monks still rang in their ears. With them came their leader, a man of about thirty, of middle stature,

florid complexion, and thick-bearded, resolute lips. This man was Vasco da Gama, and to him had been entrusted the conduct of a very special and important enterprise, one which would be attended by many very real risks, and the consequences of which, if successful, would be great and far-reaching.

All eyes were bent upon him as down to the water-side he came, he and his followers. Most of the latter were capable-looking fellows, to whom danger, whether of cruel foes or stormy waves, was no new thing. Vasco himself was a trained seaman, and had known what it was to handle his ship skilfully in the midst of a fighting fleet. His French opponents could testify to that. But the difficulties and perils that he was going forth to meet required something more than the dashing courage which could win a sea-fight. Would he prove equal to the task? Well, the King who had chosen him no doubt knew best, and the King, it was said, trusted him entirely.

On the shining waters of the Tagus four ships lay moored. They had dropped down with the river-tide from Lisbon, where there had been great doings in honour of their departure. A brilliant assemblage had gathered in the cathedral to listen to an address by the bishop, and to see Da Gama receive the royal standard from the King's own hand. For this was no ordinary voyage that was to be made, and it was

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VASCO DA GAMA BIDDING FAREWELL TO HIS FRIENDS.





fitting that both pomp and ceremony should attend the start.

All was now ready; and the vessels, gaily dressed out with flags and banners, were waiting for their crews to come aboard. Considerable delay ensued as the mariners took leave of friend after friend; everybody seemed pressing forward to say farewell and to wish them God-speed. A train of priests moved in the midst, in their gorgeous vestments, chanting and singing anthems, and beseeching the special protection of Heaven to rest upon those who were about to set forth. Tears and prayers mingled together, and the distress of parting, especially among the relatives of the seamen, was piteous. Da Gama himself had much ado to control his feelings amid this demonstration, but at last he broke away from the throng of outstretched hands, and followed his men on board.

The wind was favourable. The vessels, loosed from their moorings, glided down the river, and, as the sailors waved their last farewells, a great wail rose from the crowds along the shore, knowing that they might see the adventurers no more. Not until the sails of the four ships finally disappeared from view did the concourse break up and disperse homeward towards the city.

And now, while the dusk settles down upon roof and field and river, and the brilliant stars of the

southern night begin to twinkle, let us leave the little fleet speeding southward, and see what is the object of their voyage.

In the previous chapter we have traced the progress of discovery along the western shores of Africa. We have seen how, league by league, Prince Henry's caravels had felt their way down to the Guinea Coast; and how the ships that followed these had proceeded yet further. And last of all we saw the two ships of Bartholomew Diaz rounding the stormy Cape, and returning with the glad news to Portugal.

We also noted the fact that while the King's ships had been finding the sea-road to the Cape—the half-way house to India—his energetic travellers had been gaining information in Egypt, Arabia, and Mozambique, as to the other half of the route. They had, in fact, been prying into the secrets of the Moslem traders, whose wing-sailed craft for many a long year had been crossing and re-crossing between East Africa and the Indian ports.

Thus provided with good sound facts, King Manuel had felt himself in a position to complete the long sea journey for which Diaz had prepared the way.

Three stout caravels were then lying ready in the royal dockyards at Lisbon, having been specially built by his predecessor, King John, for exploration; and these were forthwith equipped and provisioned.

The choice of a commander had fallen on a young man of noble birth, a gentleman of the King's household,—“a discreet man, of good understanding, and of great courage for any good deed,”—by name Vasco da Gama. The business-like way in which he proceeded to make ready for the great voyage won the King's heart entirely, and the result, as we shall see, fully justified the confidence which had been placed in him.

Let us now follow the four little barks which we left heading southward, their sails well filled, and fair weather attending their course. They are of only about 120 tons burden (contrast that with a Cape Liner of to-day—say, the *Scot*, 6,850 tons), but well built, and carrying a few pieces of cannon. The *San Raphael* bore Da Gama himself; the second, the *San Gabriel*, was commanded by his brother Paulo; Nicolas Coelho was captain of the *San Miguel*; and the fourth, a storeship, sailed under Gonzalo Nunez. The three principal ships each carried a crew of eighty men, and the majority of these were picked seamen.

“Several interpreters,” says an old writer, “skilled in the Ethiopian, Arabic, and other Oriental languages, went with them”; and he adds, what will seem strange to us: “Ten malefactors, men of abilities, whose sentences of death were reversed on condition of their obedience to Gama in whatever embassies or dangers among the barbarians he might think proper to employ

them, were also on board." (An ingenious way of getting rid of criminals, and, at the same time, of turning them to good account!)

The Canary Islands, and even the Cape Verde Islands, were passed, and still blue skies and sunshine prevailed. Then came a change.

It seemed as if they had been tempted thus far only to be destroyed. Fearful storms swept down upon them, and for days they tossed on a wild expanse of angry waters. To their unaccustomed eyes the waves seemed mountainous in height; the bitter cold chilled hand and heart alike, and the pilot's voice could scarcely be heard above the howling of the wind. Then would come a lull, and almost ere each ship could be got once more upon the right course, the wind would die away altogether. A dead calm settled down upon the ocean, only less trying than the violent tempest.

So passed the days, peril and delay coming alternately to daunt these early navigators. The men, utterly discouraged and worn out, clamoured for return. Da Gama remained firm. Diaz had rounded the terrible Cape a few years before, and his pilots were with the present expedition. It would be shameful, therefore, to turn back.

Alternately the fleet stood out to sea and in to shore, running south-west and then south-east, in what must

have been a very zig-zag course. They had left Portugal nearly five months when they put in at St. Helena Bay. Again they stood out westward for one month, and then, turning in, scanned the coast. But it still stretched south.

Once more, in spite of protest, Da Gama headed away, trusting in one great curve to pass the extremity of the vast continent. For two months he stood out to sea. The weather was boisterous; cold rains almost disabled the wretched mariners, and the sun gave light for only six hours in the day. At night, with bitter murmurings, the ship's watch, hugging himself as he tramped the deck, saw the lantern of the flagship rising and falling over the stormy waters, and in its wake the three vessels followed. Of all this hardship the admiral took his share, "without sleeping or taking repose, but ever coming up at the boatswain's pipe."

At last, the sea grew calmer, and, bearing eastward again under full sail, "one morning they sighted some mountain peaks which seemed to touch the clouds; at which," says the ancient chronicler, "their pleasure was so great that all wept with joy, and all devoutly on their knees said the *Salve*." The tempest-guarded headland was doubled once more, this time by crews which, for the time being at all events, were as eager to go forward as those of Diaz had been to turn back. Now, truly, it merited the new name which King John

of Portugal had bestowed upon it—Capo Bona Speranza, the Cape of Good Hope.

Under the bright November skies, the fleet prepared to follow the eastern coast-line of the African continent. Entering the mouth of a great river, which contained very good fish, "Vasco da Gama went to see his brother, and so did Nicholas Coelho, and they all dined with great satisfaction, talking of the hardships they had gone through."

So, day by day, they crept northward, landing at more than one point to revictual and water the ships; and the men, no doubt, found plenty of use for their cross-bows in the vast plains and trackless forests.

But again the storm fiend assailed them, and the battered vessels could with difficulty keep together. Despair seized all but the stoutest-hearted, and the admiral was implored to turn homeward. His little squadron was in pitiable plight, but back he would not go. The crews mutinied then, and the perils of disunion were added to those of lightning and tempest. A ship-boy, loyal to Coelho, his master, disclosed the plot, and the ringleaders were put in irons. Da Gama, to show his independence of his subordinates, even of his faint-hearted pilots, tossed the quadrants overboard. So the days went by. Eventually the sea grew smoother, and in due time land was again sighted.

This was on Christmas Day, and hence the region was named Natal.

The new year found the voyagers again hugging the coast. About the 6th of January, 1498, they reached the mouth of a large river, which with grateful hearts they named the River of Mercy. Several canoes came off, bearing friendly natives with peace-offerings of delicious fruit and fowls; and the visitors laughed and danced and chattered with delight over the pieces of linen and biscuits and looking-glasses which the sailors gave them.

After careening and cleansing the ships (the store ship had been burned, as being no longer needed), the expedition proceeded, and arrived off Mozambique towards the end of March.

Here a Moor, named Davané, whom they had captured at sea, proved of great service to them. He had been much impressed by his foreign captors, and his fidelity was now put to the test. They gave him a scarlet cap and some coral beads, and sent him as their ambassador to the Arab Sheikh, who was the ruler of Mozambique. Davané played his part so well that the Sheikh, finely clothed, came aboard the admiral's ship. There was a long palaver, and finally Vasco da Gama obtained what he wanted, namely, pilots to conduct him to India.

But the Arab's greed had been aroused by the gold



and silver shown him on board. Treachery was soon at work. A party of sailors sent ashore to procure water, under guidance of one of the pilots, were deceived by him, and the boat's crew had to beat a retreat under a storm of missiles from the shore. When the admiral heard of this he felt loth to proceed without meting out punishment to the Sheikh, but not caring to provoke a feeling of hostility among the peoples of that coast he sent one of his ten convicts with a letter of friendly protest to the Sheikh, and then weighed anchor.

The remaining pilot on board was as bitter against the Christian intruders as his master. He advised them to let him steer them into the harbour of Quiloa, meaning to run the ships aground. But the wind blew off-shore, and the fleet passed on to Mombasa. Here the fine stone houses had quite a Spanish look, and there were many signs of trade. But rumour, in the form of a swiftly-oared galley, sent by the old Sheikh, had preceded them, and the King's flattering messages and gifts were merely a decoy. He invited them to enter the harbour, and the pilot again tried to run the leading ship aground. But the admiral was on the alert, and the cry to drop anchor and shorten sail rang out just in time. The treacherous pilot was put to the torture, and confessed.

It was high time to be off. The broad moonlight



*Agapayano*



silvered shore and sea, and the tide was already at the ebb. With feverish haste, the men began to weigh anchor. One cable snapped, and was recovered later on by the Moors, who set up the great anchor at the gate of their King's palace, where it long remained. But the ships, staying for nothing, made their way northward, and before April was out they were lying off the pleasant town of Melinde (now Malindi), with the scent of the orange trees wafted out to them on the sunset wind. The adventurers were among friends at last, though as yet they knew it not.

The next morning a boat came off with a well-dressed native, bearing an invitation from the King of Melinde, and Dacané the Moor, volunteered to go ashore and speak to him on the admiral's behalf.

Now, the King had been much influenced by the words of a certain soothsayer, who advised friendly overtures and fair dealing, since it was foretold that these newcomers should possess themselves of all India. Who this soothsayer was is not shown, but the Portuguese could have had no better ally.

At first courteous messages only passed between the ships and the palace; but, step by step, a clearer understanding was arrived at. The trust shown by the Portuguese was met by honourable treatment and kindly goodwill on the King's part. The roar and boom of the ship's cannon and the fanfare of trumpets, the brilliant

attire of the captains, and the stacks of polished arms and armour arrayed on deck, greatly impressed the African potentate; and the visitors, on their part, were equally delighted with the numberless tokens of friendship with which he loaded them. One authority states that he even trusted himself alone on the flagship, where he was royally entertained by the two brothers.

Vasco da Gama was now chafing to proceed; but the right winds not being obtainable at that season, it was the middle of July before the departure could take place, and various delays postponed it to early August. Then all being ready, and each vessel having been provided with large cisterns holding a supply of fresh water, the adventurers made ready to start. A final banquet was given by the King, and much valuable advice was tendered as to their expected dealings with Indian traders.

Two skilful pilots were sent on board by the King; also liberal supplies of food of all sorts. The shores of the harbour were lined with excited crowds, and the King himself came off in his boat to bid the voyagers God-speed. Then the sails were loosed, and, amid much cheering and fluttering of gay flags, the ships passed away from that hospitable shore.

Twenty days later, after an uneventful run across the sunny waters of the Indian Ocean, a grey mountain loomed up on the eastern horizon, and ere long, from

deck and rigging, the mariners stared at the land they had risked so much to reach.

Of all the adventures that were still in store for them—of how Vasco sent ambassadors to the King of Calicut, and how he himself was induced to visit the King in person; of the treachery and intrigue he had to encounter; of the monarch's avarice and the courtiers' jealousy—there is no room to speak here. A more friendly reception awaited them at the seaport of Cananor, and here they left the faithful Moor, Davané, whom they dismissed with valuable presents. On the 20th November they again set sail, and ran westward and southward once more.

Early in January, 1499, they put in at Melinde, having promised the King to bear from him tokens of friendship to the Court of Lisbon. The crews had suffered greatly from sickness brought on by the climate and unsuitable diet, and thirty seamen had died. The quiet rest, and the fresh food and water, were most welcome. Then, after an exchange of costly gifts, which it is dazzling to picture, the homeward voyage was resumed.

One account says that, before they reached Zanzibar, Paulo da Gama's ship ran aground on a sand bank, and was set on fire and abandoned, her occupants being distributed between the two remaining vessels. But fair weather prevailed, and they rounded the Cape of Good Hope, in sight of it, under full sail.

While crossing the Equator, dead calms often caused delay, and the floating fields of sargasso weed hindered them. The good Paulo da Gama, who seems to have been as able a seaman as Vasco, and a more lovable character, had fallen ill, and, being carried ashore while the ships lay anchored off the Island of Terceira, in the Azores, he there died, and was buried in the monastery. His brother, the admiral, was inconsolable. Now, when the brightest moment of his life was at hand, the clouds of sorrow had come up. It was with a sad face and a heavy heart that he entered the Tagus and looked on the preparations that had been made to celebrate his return.

The arrival took place on September 18th, 1499, after an absence of two years and a half.

A swift caravel had carried the news from Terceira to King Manuel, and crowds were waiting to catch sight of the sun-blistered, water-logged ships which had accomplished so wonderful a voyage. Honours of the highest sort were forced upon the grief-stricken admiral, and money gifts were lavished freely on Nicolas Coelho, and all who had survived among the crews. And for long afterwards, the people loved to talk of the trophies which Dom Vasco had spread out before the King—lustrous jewels and golden chains, spices and perfumes, porcelain and richly-woven stuffs—pledges of the wealth which was to pour into Europe, now that Portugal had found the sea-road to India.

## WESTWARD TO A NEW WORLD

THE VOYAGE OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

1492



Of all the "Old Voyagers," who ever put to sea there is none whose place in history is so sure, none whose exploit has been so fully and gratefully recognised, as Christopher Columbus. He had his share, and more than his share, of disappointment and fret and ill-usage in his lifetime, but the centuries that have passed since he died in poverty and obscurity at Valladolid have seen his fame spread through all the world.

He was no mere fortunate discoverer, no idle adventurer who reaped the reward of other men's labours. Columbus was one of the world's heroes. He would have been a truly great man even had he failed in the grand undertaking of his life. Many attempts have been made to disparage what he did, to rob him of the credit due to him, and slander has tried



to smirch his good name. But the more our knowledge of him has grown, our knowledge of his hopes and fears, his working and waiting, his unfaltering trust in God, and his deep conviction that God was calling him to the task set before him—the more we are forced to admire the hero and respect the man.

The story of his life has been told so many times, and the main facts are so well known, that the events leading up to the great voyage of 1492 need not be retailed here at any length.

The Genoese sea-captain came to Lisbon about the year 1454, as many of his Italian countrymen had come before him. He was then about twenty years of age, a rather powerfully-built young fellow, with clear piercing eyes and high calm forehead, ruddy cheeks, and a mouth that suggested *determination*. He was the son of a weaver, but had taken early to a sea-calling, and had seen something of serious fighting. Between the date of his coming to Portugal and the year of his great Atlantic journey, he was destined to visit England and the bleak Iceland seas, and he appears also to have been among the many western captains who made their way down to the Guinea Coast.

It was quite natural that he should come to Lisbon. Lisbon the capital, and Lagos, the Navigator Prince's own seaport, were veritable nurseries of explorers and

exploring schemes. To see the forest of masts beside the quays, and to listen to the number of foreign tongues chattering along the water-side, was in itself enough to set the visitor thinking of lands across the ocean. Here was the place for any mariner with a bold project to obtain a hearing.

And young Columbus had a project. It was shaping itself slowly; so slowly, indeed, that the patron most likely to have entertained it—the wise, enthusiastic Prince Henry at Sagres—died without having been consulted. Perhaps even *he* would not have taken up the idea, for his gaze was steadily fixed on the south, and the eyes of the young Genoese were looking wistfully to the west. Each had in view as his object the reaching of the Indies; but the Prince was hoping that each fresh caravel that left Lagos and ran down along the West Coast of Africa would double the far end of the continent and so get eastward, whereas Columbus argued to himself that, if the world was round, a more direct way would be to strike due west across the vast ocean whose waves rolled in upon the Portugal cliffs.

At last, after much pondering and long studying of maps and charts, Columbus submitted his project to King John. He had the greatest confidence in himself and his plan, but the wisacres to whom the King referred the matter shook their heads. The idea was too

much of a novelty, and they would not countenance it. When he urged it, they resented it as an unwarrantable piece of assumption; he was treated as a faddist, a man with a craze. His eager enthusiasm bored them.

Their royal master was also cold to the scheme. Columbus seems to have stipulated that he should be allowed a free hand in the enterprise, and that, whatever new countries should be discovered, the administration and a large share in the profits should be his. That did not please the King. He coveted the prize and the glory, but he grudged the concessions. So, when one of his priestly advisers suggested that some of the King's own men should be sent out to try the route with Columbus's charts, the shameful trick was agreed to.

But no success favoured the attempt. Back to Lisbon came the craven pilots, with a long story of how baffling tempests and blinding mists had fought against them; of bad omens and warning signs; and of the floating sargasso weed through whose matted webs the prows could not cleave their way.

When Columbus saw how he had been betrayed, he turned his back on Portugal, and looked about for a worthier patron. The French and the English Courts both occurred to him. But at last he made up his mind to lay the matter before the royal pair who sat upon the Spanish throne.

The time was not favourable. The remains of a civil war were still smouldering like hot embers here and there, and Ferdinand and his Queen were taken up with a great scheme for driving the Moors out of Granada—a new crusade within their own borders. So, in spite of the help of influential friends and relatives, no serious attention would be got for his project. A delay of something like seven years ensued, during which Columbus was restless with suspense. “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick,” and what wonder if, absorbed in his “dreams,” he grew careless of all besides and was ridiculed as half-melancholy, half-mad?

How better days came at last, every schoolboy knows. It is a romantic story; the dreamer and his little son stopping at the gate of the monastery of La Rabida to ask for alms; his kindly reception by the good monks; the intercessory letter sent to Queen Isabella; the Queen’s answer, and the long interval that followed; the second visit to the Court; the refusal, and finally the acceptance, of the startling terms which Columbus insisted on. The royal assent was followed by a message to the town of Palos, commanding it to supply ships, men, and stores.

But even better than this peremptory decree was the kindly assistance given by Juan Perez, the “friend at Court,” who had seconded the appeal of Columbus.

He largely helped to win over the people of Palos, and induce them to look favourably on the Genoese and his great scheme.

Another important helper was a local shipbuilder and master mariner, Martin Alonzo Pinzon. That the expedition got afloat with so little further delay was due in a great measure to this energetic seaman. The people of the place knew and respected him, and when he put his hand to the enterprise the whole outlook was changed. Mallet and plane and saw were set merrily going; masts, sails, and cordage came together as if by magic; the vessels and their destination was the one subject of talk in the town; and the roads to and from Palos and the convent of La Rabida, where Columbus still lodged, were thronged with visitors and messengers.

At last the ships were ready, and the crews were ordered to be prepared to start as soon as ever the right wind should blow.

In the Columbian Library at Seville may be seen sketches of the three caravels drawn by the hand of Columbus himself. They show striking differences in size and rig. The *Santa Maria* was the biggest, and was built very high in the stern; she was the only decked ship of the three, and was allotted to the admiral. Next in size was the *Pinta*, of which Martin Pinzon was commander. The *Nina* was a tiny ship, very

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TOWARD THE LAND OF THE SETTING SUN:—THE "SANTA MARIA,"  
FLAG-SHIP OF COLUMBUS.



much like the lateen rigged fishing-boats that flit to and fro in the blue bays of the Mediterranean. It is interesting to note that on board of her was an Englishman and an Irish guide. Naturally, the men of Palos predominated among the crews.

On the evening of August 2nd, 1492, the mariners walked in procession to the convent on the breezy cliffs, and the blessing of Heaven was invoked upon the great enterprise. Returning to the ships they hoisted sail in readiness for the favouring breeze. At three o'clock in the morning the trees round the convent began to whisper, and Columbus awaking stole into the little dim chapel and knelt in silent prayer. What his thoughts were, as he bowed before the altar, on the eve of separation from home and loved ones, who can describe?

At daybreak a boat put off from the *Santa Maria*, and without further ceremony or delay the admiral went on board. The rattle of ropes, and the cheery cries of the brown-skinned sailors at their final duties, soon awoke the light sleepers in Palos, and out came the villagers, eager, in spite of their drowsiness, to be present when the last farewells were said. But the heart of the Genoese, though sad with the pain of parting, was impatient to get away upon his quest; and soon the three ships were gliding from that pleasant shore which had seen the lifting of the shadow



and the fulfilment of his dearest wish. The wistful eyes of Perez and his attendants watched from the heights of La Rabida the receding sails, until they passed out of sight.

Away went the little fleet, touching at the Canary Islands to repair an injury to the steering-gear of the *Pinta*, and then, on the 6th September, standing out "into the unknown west."

To very many of the men on board, willing though they had been to throw in their lot with such a shrewd and seasoned master mariner as Martin Pinzon, the whole thing seemed a rash experiment. It was easy enough, when lounging mallet in hand among ropes and timber at Palos, to smile a superior smile as the old stories of sea-terrors went round. But when away out on the deep, rising and falling to the long Atlantic swell, with a stretch of green water from horizon to horizon, and the ship's prow pointing westward, ever westward, day after day and night after night—it was very different. Then would come crowding back into the mind all the wild tales that their forefathers had implicitly believed, and many a stout fellow on board fervently wished himself again at Palos, and called himself "fool" for ever having embarked on such a mad quest.

The last, or well-nigh the last, sight of land, had been the giant cone of Teneriffe, capped with fiery

smoke—a volcano in eruption. This was sufficiently disquieting, and Columbus had to explain it fully before their alarm was dispelled. Shortly after that they were perplexed and troubled by what modern sailors familiarly know as the variation of the compass. Even Columbus himself had to *invent* an explanation, being at a loss to know how to account for it. And so, with fear and misgiving in the hearts of all but a few on board, the three little ships ploughed their way towards the far country which was *somewhere* across the ocean.

The admiral from the first had kept a daily journal, and the opening line under the title, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," quite represents the feeling with which he regarded the voyage and the record of it. The words were not put as a formality, a mere pious heading. Columbus was firmly convinced that he was "called of God," and that the whole enterprise, so long postponed, was directly under Divine guidance. It was this, as much as his natural perseverance, that strengthened him against all temptations to turn back.

After the first day or two, the admiral gave attention to every sign, however trivial, that could be construed as an indication of land. A stray bird or two winging over the water was noticed by the men of the *Nina*: at once he reminded them that it was not the habit of this and that species to go more than so many leagues from shore. A bunch of water-weed drawn up disclosed

a crab tangled in it; "these crabs," averred the admiral, "are a certain sign of land." A whale went plunging past the ship, and he declared the same of it.

Early in September the *Santa Maria* shipped a heavy sea across her bows, but for the most part the ships were wafted along by haleyon breezes. For eleven days there was no need to trim the sails. Columbus was well pleased. In his log, he writes that the early mornings on deck were quite a source of delight—the weather being like that of an Andalusian spring—and the only thing wanting was the song of nightingales.

On the 18th, a great flock of birds went past, flying west; and he recalls how most of the islands held by the Portuguese were discovered by the flight of birds. On the 20th, "two or three land-birds came singing to the ship, and disappeared before sunset." On the 25th, a cry was raised on one of the ships that land could be seen, and congratulations were freely exchanged; but the supposed coast-line proved to be only a low-lying cloud.

In order to prevent the crews getting alarmed at the increasing stretch of water that lay between them and the hills of Spain, Columbus frankly admits, in his journal, that he kept two reckonings; one, the true distance, for his own guidance, the other, shorter and feigned, for the men. For instance, on October 1st,

it was announced that 584 leagues had been covered, but the private log in the admiral's cabin showed 707.

Four days later, the entry runs: "To God be many thanks given, the air being pleasant and temperate, with no weed (*i.e.* in the sea), many sandpipers and flying-fish coming on the deck in numbers." This sargasso weed, to which reference is so often made in the journal, was what had scared back to Lisbon the Portuguese pilots whom the King had sent out provided with Columbus's charts.

The very natural fear of being caught in this clogging tangle, that sometimes extends like floating fields over the ocean's surface, recurred to the mariners now. What could be more horrible than to drive into this network and remain there, helpless to move in any direction? And they pictured the prospect—the sails hanging against the mast, unstirred by any wind, the burning sun beating down from a cloudless heaven, the food supply failing, and, more terrible still, the water-casks drained to the dregs. Such thoughts, when based on knowledge, drive men desperate. Murmurs began to be heard on board even the admiral's ship.

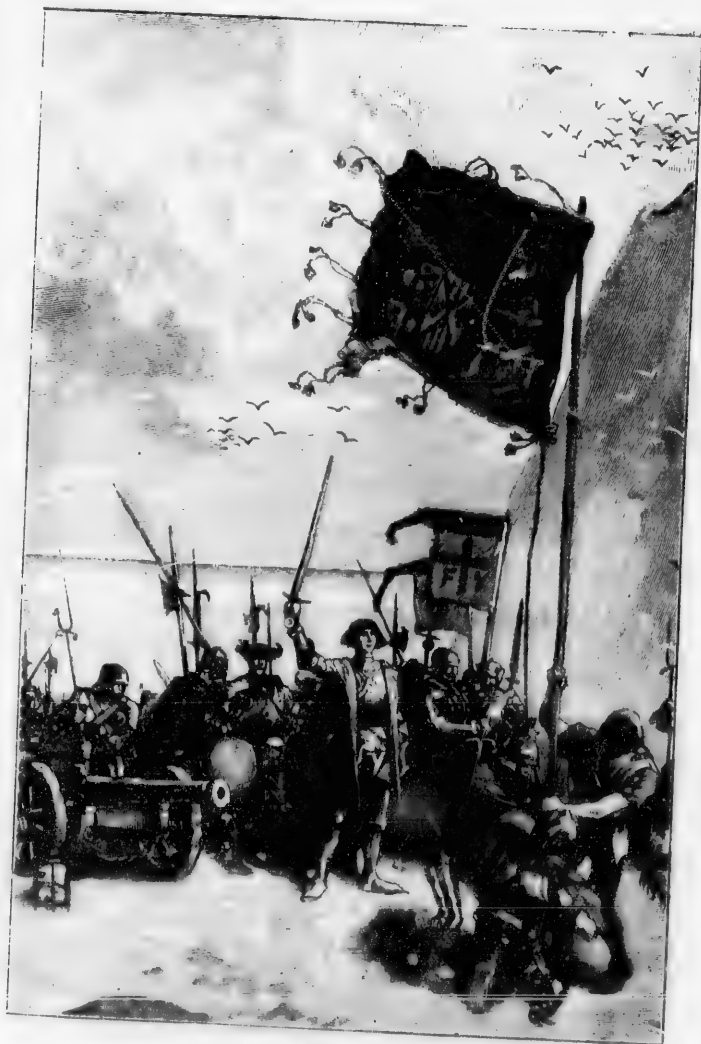
Columbus met these with combined gentleness and firmness. The short entry in the journal speaks volumes: "Here the people could endure no longer. They complained of the length of the voyage. But the admiral cheered them up in the best way he

could, giving them hopes of the advantages they might gain from it. He added that, however much they might complain, he had to go to the Indies, *and that he would go on until he found them*, with the help of our Lord."

Pinzon was quite as determined, and roundly be-rated the murmurers for their cowardice. "Your grace should hang half a dozen of these fellows, and throw them overboard," cried the blunt sea-dog. The influence he had over the mariners was very great; they respected him as a practical and experienced ship-master; and they were now ready to abide by the wish of the two leaders, and sail onward.

The 11th of October brought fresh signs of land being not far distant—a broken reed, a branch of a tree with ripe red berries, and, more significant than all, a wooden pole bearing traces of an iron tool. The evening closed in, and the stars came out clear and brilliant, looking down on the calm deep. Columbus felt certain that he was nearing some coast. He was keenly anxious and full of thought. Sleep was out of the question, but he passed much of the time below deck in earnest prayer.

The *Pinta*, a faster sailer, was ahead of the *Santa Maria*. At two in the morning a glad cry rang out over the waters. Rodrigo de Triana, a seaman, perched in the tops of Pinzon's vessel, had sighted, several miles away, a low sandy beach on which the moonlight fell.



THE LANDING OF COLUMBUS.



Close upon the cry came the report of a gun. It was Pinzon's signal that the voyage was ended, the long anxiety at rest, the hope of a lifetime fulfilled.

Columbus himself had already seen a moving light, "like a candle that went up and down, as if people on shore were passing with it from house to house." But, at the time, he could not be certain whether or no it betokened land.

The three ships were hove-to until daylight. "Then," says the eloquent Spanish writer, Emilio Castelar, "Columbus donned his richest apparel, flung upon his shoulders a cloak of rosy purple, grasped in one hand the sword of combat, and in the other the Redeemer's Cross, and standing beneath the sovereign banner, spread like a canopy above his head, and gold-embroidered with the royal initials and the Castilian crown, he assembled all the chief comrades of his voyage about him, as in a peerless court pageant. Then, disembarking, he knelt upon the land, raised his eyes heavenward, and, with uplifted arms, joined with his followers in a *Te Deum*."

Such was the great voyage, and such was its ending. Only the island fringes of the vast continent had as yet been touched. But a New World had been given to the mariner, to the trader, to the conqueror, when the feet of the great Genoese trod the island sands of San Salvador.



## THE FIRST VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD

THE EXPLOIT OF FERDINAND MAGELLAN

1519



HE first man who attempted to sail right round the globe must have been a man of no common courage. Everything almost was against him. The knowledge at his disposal was scanty. Such maps and charts as he carried had great blanks in them, which he himself filled in as he proceeded. Ships in those days were small and clumsy—even the best of them. Food and water could not be kept fresh for long, and to be far from land for several months together meant facing the horrors of thirst and hunger. Then, too, unknown seas might have special dangers of their own—dense fogs, cross-currents, fearful tempests; and superstition hinted darkly of evil spirits lying in wait to baffle and destroy the intruder.

Over against these discouragements were set the

passion for discovery, the restless love of adventure, and, equally potent, if not more so, the hope of making money.

The name of Columbus is in the mouth of every schoolboy. The name of Ferdinand Magellan is far less familiar. And yet, of these two splendid explorers, the man who passed through the narrow straits which bear his name, and struck out boldly in a line of four thousand leagues across the unknown vast Pacific, deserves the higher honour.

Side by side with this exploit, even the voyage of Vasco da Gama round the Cape of Storms to India sinks into the shade. For Da Gama did not originate the enterprise which he carried out, and the most difficult part of it had been already accomplished by Diaz. His ships, moreover, were manned by his own countrymen, and he carried with him the King's authority. And, as for the object of his voyage, it was, before everything, a money-making one: namely, the opening up of a rich trade with the East. Whereas Magellan, like Columbus, thought out the enterprise himself, and had to urge a foreign monarch to provide the means; his crews were almost entirely composed of Spaniards, jealous of him and resentful of his command; and, inasmuch as the Spice Islands which they were to make for would probably be found to lie well within Portugal's share of the world, the honour

of discovering a new sea-route to "the shining Orient" would have to be the chief reward.

These facts ought to be remembered—not that the glory due to brave men like Vasco da Gama should be made less, but that the glory of the two greatest voyagers should be seen and admired the more.

Ferdinand Magellan (or de Magalhães, as the old documents spell it) was of noble birth, and had served his sovereign, the King of Portugal, in an expedition to India as early as the year 1510. On one occasion, when two of the ships ran aground among the Maldivé Islands, and the captains and chief men took to the boats, Magellan volunteered to remain with the crews and direct operations until assistance could be sent. "And in this," says the old chronicler, "Fernan de Magalhães worked hard, and did much service, and attended well to everything."

As a gentleman of the King's household, Magellan knew full well that the fickle sunshine of royal favour must be sought if a man would rise to honour; and he seems to have sought it long. He could claim to be a skilled soldier, who had received and given many strokes in hard fight, and his knowledge and experience as a navigator were indisputable. But, for reasons which are not very clear to us, he was coldly dealt with, and shunted and rebuffed. He had a project in his mind for finding a new sea-road to the Indies by

way of the west. His sovereign, King Manuel, would not listen to it; whereupon, indignant and discouraged, Magellan determined to offer his scheme and his services elsewhere.

He left Portugal and settled in the kingdom of Castile. Its ruler, Charles V., appreciated his new subject, considered and approved his plans, and gave him ships and men. King Manuel now did his utmost to thwart and hinder him, setting spies to watch him and make mischief; and some of the ill-natured letters sent home by these spies to their royal master may still be read. But, on the 10th of August, 1519, Magellan dropped down stream from Seville, and, after some delay at St. Lucar, the bar was crossed, and the expedition headed south-west for the Canary Islands.

It consisted of some two hundred and thirty-seven men and five vessels—the *St. Antonio*, 120 tons burden; the *Trinity*, 110 tons; the *Conception*, 90 tons; the *Victoria*, 85 tons; and the *Santiago*, 75 tons. The flagship was the *Trinity*, and she carried Magellan, to whom absolute power had been given by the King. The flagship led the way, and the admiral had arranged a system of signals, by means of lanterns, to guard against the scattering of his little fleet.

The towering cone of Teneriffe was left behind on the 3rd of October, and they ran south down the west coast of Africa.

Battling winds and lazy calms proved early hindrances, and the Spaniards shuddered as they watched the great sharks moving round the ships when the ocean lay like glass under the torrid sun. Sudden squalls varied the monotony, and then, in the black starless nights, the crews watched with superstitious awe the lightning dancing at the mast-head.<sup>1</sup> Mediterranean sailors still call this strange phenomenon "the fire of St. Elmo," and these early voyagers deemed it betokened the presence of the patron saint, and took courage at the sight. It was their belief that no vessel on which the fire descended could founder.

A safe passage was made across to Brazil, and a fortnight was spent in the beautiful harbour of what is now Rio Janeiro. The degraded habits of the cannibal natives were a source of wonder to the sailors, and they stared with interest at the sleeping-hammocks in the huts, the rude canoes hollowed out of tree-trunks with stone tools, the girdles of parrot feathers worn by the men, and the curious pebble ornaments inserted in the lower lip.

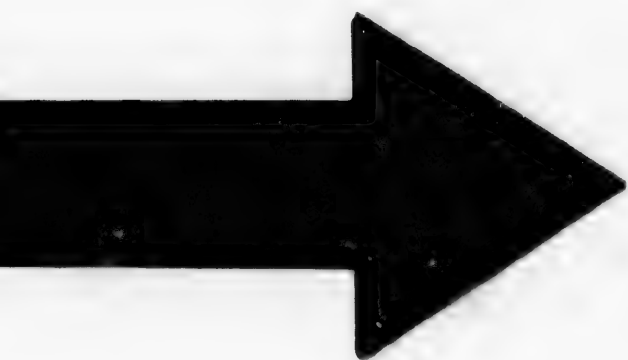
<sup>1</sup> Our readers may remember the passage in Shakespeare's *Tempest*, where he describes the tricks played at Prospero's bidding by the spirit Ariel, who had taken the form of a wandering fire-flame:—

"I boarded the King's ship; now on the beak,  
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,  
I flam'd amazement. Sometimes I'd divide,  
And burn in many places; on the topmast,  
The yards, and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly  
Then meet, and join."



FERDINAND MAGELLAN.

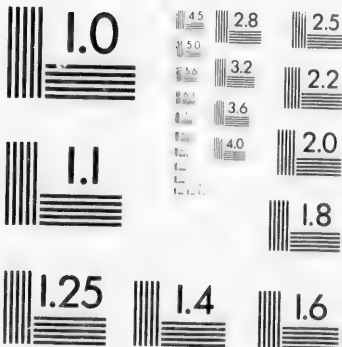






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The mouth of the River Plate was passed, after an adventure with some fleet-footed natives, and on March 31st the fleet entered Port St. Julian and wintered there.

For some time no signs of human life appeared, along the dreary Patagonian coast, but one day a gigantic fellow came down to the beach, and overtures of friendship were made to him. "He was so tall that the tallest of us only came up to his waist. He had a large face, painted red all round, and his eyes also were painted yellow around them." Food and drink were given to this giant, and, among other things, a steel mirror was shown to him. At the sight of his likeness the savage was much terrified—as well he might be. Another giant, who is described as "*a gracious and amiable person, who liked to dance and leap,*" was taught certain Latin prayers, but had a voice like a bull. On receiving a number of trinkets and clothing, "he went away very joyous and satisfied."

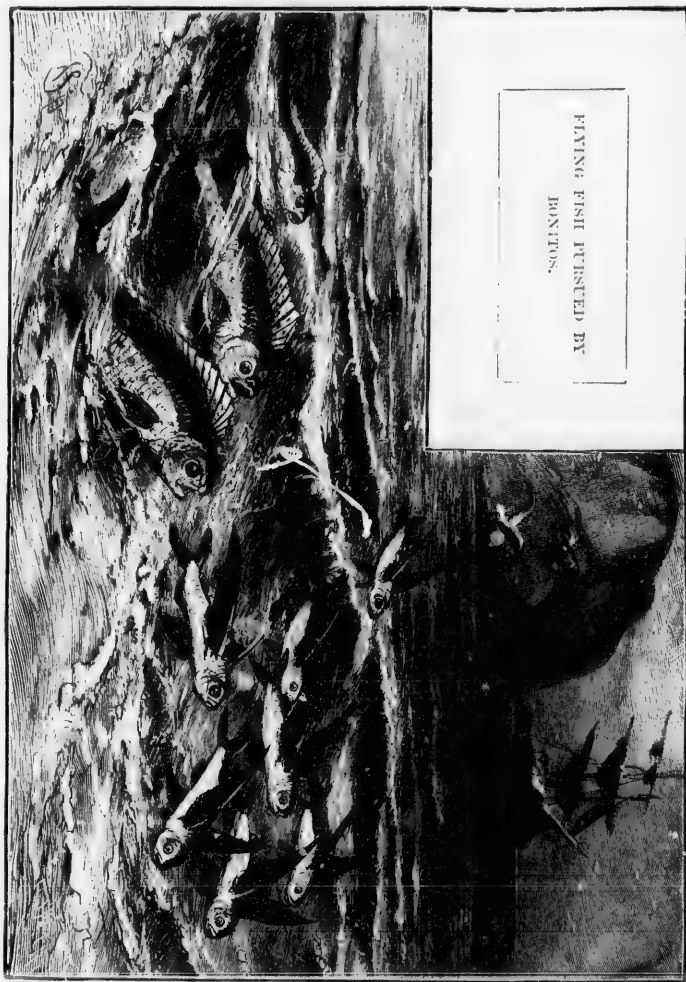
Two of these interesting giants were kidnapped, the admiral wishing to take them home to Spain. We are told that "they consumed a large basketful of biscuit, and rats without skinning them, and they drank half a bucket of water at each time." But the loss of their liberty told on their health, and they did not live long. The action of the visitors was resented by the natives, and in an affray on shore a sailor was killed.

A more serious matter was a conspiracy against Magellan, which was plotted by the other captains, while the ships lay at Port St. Julian. But the admiral was not the man to be caught unawares. He knew the jealousy that from the outset had rankled in the hearts of his colleagues. His suspicions were at once aroused, and, finding them to be well founded, he acted with promptitude and decision. A boat's crew, secretly armed, ran alongside one of the disaffected ships; there was a short parley, and the next moment Mendoza, the chief plotter, was down upon the deck, a dying man. There was at once an uproar. Magellan heard it, ran out his guns, and bore down upon the ship. His own crew were drawn up in fighting order, and their formidable front had its effect on the conspirators. They shrank abashed before the admiral's stern inquiry. The mutiny was crushed, and before sunset six of the chief culprits were hanging from the yard-arm, with the corpse of Mendoza head downwards—an object-lesson for the whole fleet.

While reconnoitring along the coast the *Santiago* was wrecked, but her crew escaped and rejoined their comrades. About the 24th of August the expedition left Port St. Julian, but October was far advanced before they reached the entrance of the straits which

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have ever since been called after Magellan. Here a pause was made.

The question was this: Was the opening merely an indentation of the coast, or was it a thoroughfare into the great Western Sea? The admiral resolved to send two of his ships to find out how far the water-way extended. Two days elapsed before they returned, and fears were felt for their safety. But they brought glad news. The tortuous straits offered a free passage, in spite of baffling winds, and the fleet moved on amid much rejoicing.

The crew and pilot of the *St. Antonio*, however, were longing to return home, and, under cover of darkness, they retraced their course. Search was made for them, even to the entrance of the straits, but they had got clear away.

Delighted with having accomplished the passage, the mariners of the three remaining ships were in a mood to praise everything. "I think," writes one who accompanied the expedition, "there is not in the world a more beautiful country or better strait than this one." They praised the good anchorage, the sweetness of the mountain waters, the palatable fish, and the celery which they gathered in abundance beside the streams.

On Wednesday, November 28th, 1520, they left the straits, and before them opened the boundless expanse

of the Pacific Ocean. Well might Magellan have hesitated before he moved out into the great solitude. A less daring soul would have shrunk from such a tremendous voyage. But he knew that somewhere away in the far north-west lay the Spice Islands which he had come to find, and until these were reached he was ready to sail on and on, through fair weather or foul.

A northerly course was at first followed, and then we see it curve away on the old chart till it crosses the Tropic of Capricorn, after which it runs westward, and then north-west, until, crossing the Equator, it touches and runs along the twelfth degree of north latitude till it reaches the Ladrone Islands.

And how did the mariners fare? Both water and provisions ran short. Weevilly biscuits and "water that was yellow and stinking" with having stood so long in the casks unreplenished, cooked ox-hides, and rats—these at last formed their staple diet. As a natural result, scurvy, the sailor's plague, made havoc in the ships; nineteen of the men died, and very few of the others kept their health.

Says Pigapheta, our chief authority: "During those three months and twenty days we went in an open sea. . . . It is well named the Pacific, for, during this time, we met with no storm. We saw no land, except two small uninhabited islands, in which we found only



birds and trees"; and he adds devoutly, "If our Lord had not aided us in giving us good weather . . . we should all have died of hunger in this very vast sea, and I think that *never man will* [again] *undertake to perform such a voyage.*"

The night sky, for the earlier part of those three months, revealed the beautiful Southern Cross, "a cross of five stars, very bright, straight one with another." And the days—albeit uneventful and monotonous—brought their interest for those of the adventurers who had any eye for natural loveliness, though it were but the graceful balancing of the wide-winged albatross, the wet sparkle of the flying-fish, the wave-like movement of the dolphins, the morning and evening splendours, and the peaceful noon-tides, when

" . . . the wide Pacific  
Slumbered in azure from sky to sky."

The Ladrone Islands were so named by the adventurers because of the thievish tricks of the natives, who came round the ships in their black and white canoes, and even managed to cut adrift one of the boats towed astern.

By March 16th the Philippine Islands were reached, and the sailors drank their fill of palm wine and tasted the sweet white "marrow" of the cocoanut. Some days later the admiral received a visit from one of the

island "kings," and there was much palaver and giving and receiving of presents. A sham fight between two of the three crews in their steel armour was a source of great interest, and the dusky native stared at the maps and the line of route pricked upon it, speechless with admiration at the white man's daring. He made the admiral and others come ashore and feast with him in his curious palm-thatched dwelling, and was very friendly and affable. All his utensils were of gold, but his costume was primitive enough.

On Easter Day, Magellan and fifty of the men, gallantly attired, landed and celebrated mass, after which they erected a cross on the highest ground. For seven days the ships lay off this pleasant and hospitable shore. Then a move was made to the port of Sebu, where, by showing "the iron hand under the velvet glove," the proud monarch was induced to treat with the visitors, and eventually became so friendly that trade relations were established, gifts were exchanged, and with much ceremony the king and his queen and many of his people were baptized into the Christian faith.

But a sad fatality was about to happen. It seems that one of the island chiefs who had avowed his allegiance to the King of Spain besought the help of Magellan, his new "brother," in subduing a neighbouring rival. He asked for a single boat's crew; but

Magellan resolved to lead the force himself, and ordered sixty of his men under arms.

With grave forebodings, his officers entreated him not to go in person. But he persisted, and at midnight the expedition, with a flotilla of native boats, set out. The hostile island was reached before day-break, and in the early light of the tropic dawn the attacking force waded through the shallows. The islanders—fifteen hundred strong—were in no way daunted, and a shower of spears hurtled through the air. The Spaniards replied with their cross-bows and muskets, but, owing to the wooden shields and the agile movements of their foes, neither bolts nor bullets did much execution. Thinking to terrify the enemy more effectually, Magellan ordered some of his men to fire the thatch of the huts, but this only heightened the fury of the warlike natives. With loud cries they crowded down to the water's edge, and the Spaniards were at length compelled to retreat.

Only some six or eight men were left with Magellan, and, amid a storm of stones and darts, the little band began to give way. In the hand-to-hand fighting it was "every man for himself"; and the islanders, recognising Magellan as the leader, pressed hard upon him. Twice his helmet was struck off, a poisoned arrow pierced his leg, and when, having lost his lance, he tried to draw his sword, he found his arm had been

crippled by a further wound. With splendid self-forgetfulness, he kept looking round to see if his followers had reached the boats, "as though," says an eye-witness, "his obstinate fight had no other object than to give an opportunity for the retreat of his men." A heavy blow threw him on his face, and the next moment, from a score of wounds, his life-blood was reddening the waters. The remnant who had stood by him staggered out, bruised and bleeding, to the boats, and the crews, heartsick and dejected, made their way back to the ships.

It was a most sad and deplorable ending to the adventurous life of so notable a seaman. The one bright feature in this episode was the personal bravery and unselfishness displayed by Magellan, and to this the chief narrator of the voyage bears loving and eloquent testimony.

This occurrence took place on 27th April, 1521, and the departure of the fleet was hastened by treachery. An ill-used slave on board fled ashore and induced the King of Sebu to entrap the officers. The latter were invited to a feast and murdered, and, this becoming known, the crews weighed anchor and sailed away, leaving behind them the unburied body of Magellan (for which the islanders had refused ransom) and of four-and-twenty leading members of the expedition.

Juan Carvalho, pilot of the flag-ship, was now elected to the vacant command.

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THE DEATH OF MAGELLAN.



The serious losses sustained by the fleet led to the crew of the *Conception*, along with the principal stores she carried, being distributed between the two remaining ships, and the abandoned vessel was set on fire. Then away down the island-studded seas went the survivors, landing at intervals to gather fruit and refill their water-butts, and ever wondering at the strange sights they saw. Now it would be the blow-pipes and poisoned arrows of the natives; now, the grotesque hog-deer of Borneo, or splendid plumes of the birds of paradise. They were fetched ashore in proas (sail canoes), bedizened with peacock feathers, and accompanied with musicians playing on drums and cymbals; they rode on stately elephants, gaily caparisoned; they slept on soft beds with silk coverlets—luxurious, indeed, after a ship's berth; they had audience with dusky potentates, squatting on rich carpets, and surrounded by fierce-eyed warriors; they listened to curious and amusing wonder-stories about hidden treasure and fabulous creatures; they tasted cloves and cinnamon, ginger and palm wine; they loaded their ships with spices till a King's present had to be refused for very lack of space; they fought with junks and drove them aground; and they experienced, especially one October night, the buffetings of a tropical storm.

It was not until Wednesday, November 6th, 1521,

that their long search was rewarded. Fourteen leagues away to the eastward rose the high coast-line of the Moluccas, or Spice Islands, and two days later they dropped anchor at Tidore, with a loud salute of guns.

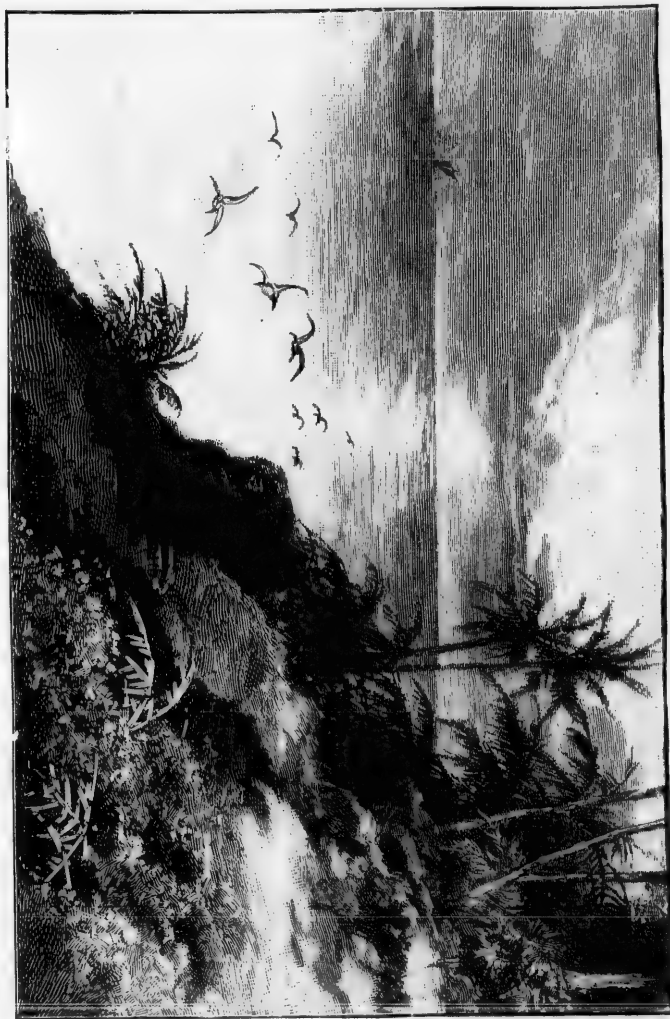
Trade relations were established and tokens of goodwill were exchanged, the King proving most gracious and kindly disposed. When, on preparing to depart, the *Trinity* was found to be leaking, he offered the free services of his workmen to repair her, and provided dwellings for the sailors during their enforced stay.

Wishing to make haste back to Spain, the crew of the *Victoria* bade good-bye to their comrades, and, having received their messages and letters for friends at home, set sail. Juan Carvalho, with fifty-three men, remained at Tidore; and the heavily-laden *Victoria*, with sixty souls on board of her, ploughed her way southward across the sunny seas. Isle after isle, beautiful with palms and redolent of spices, faded behind them, and then began the long mid-ocean voyage to the Cape of Good Hope.

Boisterously the waves of that stormy headland beat upon the gallant little ship, leaky and over-freighted, and her crew sickened with hunger and cold and the hardships of incessant work and vigil. A few of them had begged that a stay might be made at Mozambique, but the duty of speedy return and the



“ISLE AFTER ISLE, BEAUTIFUL WITH PALMS AND REDOLENT OF SPICES, FADED BEHIND THEM.”





natural home-longing prevailed. The Cape was passed on May 6th, and after touching, in July, for a final food supply, at one of the Cape Verde Islands, where a boat's crew was arrested and detained by the Portuguese authorities, the *Victoria* entered the familiar waters of Lucar, Seville, on Saturday, the 6th of September, 1522. Out of the sixty men who had sailed in her from the Moluccas only eighteen remained.

Says one who was of that number: "From the day when we left this bay of San Lucar until our return thither, we reckoned that we had run more than fourteen thousand four hundred and sixty leagues, and we had completed going round the earth from East to West."

## WESTWARD WITH THE CABOTS

1497 AND 1498



It was an exciting time for mariners and dwellers in seaport towns. A wonderful story of newly-found lands far off across the Atlantic was passing from lip to lip, and Southern Europe was thrilling with the news. A Genoese navigator, aided and commissioned by the King of Spain, had crossed the ocean, intent on reaching the Indies, and, after sailing westward for nine weeks, had reached land. How vast that land was no one then realised. Indeed, only the outlying fringe of islands had been explored; the continent itself was still unknown. The islands, moreover, were supposed to be part of the Indies; and over this comforting fancy there was great rejoicing.

Even the quiet folk of England, settling down (so far as royal impostors and armed risings would permit)

after the long, fierce rivalry and strife of the White Rose with the Red, caught the excitement. The "salt blood" began to tingle in their veins. They grew to look upon the sea no longer as a barrier shutting them in, but as a free highway into the mysterious West. Might they not hope to take their part in the discoveries which were marking the close of the century?

They were indeed to share in them. A year or two more was to elapse, and then an English crew, in an English ship, sailing from an English port, was to discover the coast of the North American Continent. But a far-famed Republic on the Adriatic was to provide the captain!

There was a boy in Venice who was destined to go with that expedition, to see with his own eyes the new land beyond the seas, two thousand three hundred miles away. His father was a merchant, and, as his business took him a great deal to foreign parts, the little fellow must early have exchanged his cradle songs and fairy stories for "traveller's tales" at his father's knee. Perhaps the sunburnt face bending over him would twitch with a smile, and there would come a marvellous romance of ogres and dragons, sea-monsters and mermaids,

"And of the cannibals that each other eat,  
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders."

But if the child's round-eyed wonder was shadowed with a doubt, the speaker could fall back on the "quite true" stories told by Marco Polo, himself a Venetian, of what he had seen during his travels in the East. And if that was not sufficiently real to the young listener, the narrator could introduce the personal touch to give it an added charm. For he, John Cabot, trading with the towns and settlements on the Arabian Coast, had himself seen much that was strange and unfamiliar to European eyes. He had trodden the sun-scorched sands, had mixed with the motley crowds in Moslem cities, and had watched the patient camels plodding in from the desert, laden with spices from the East.

Perhaps, indeed, it was this last-named sight which first turned the current of his thoughts towards a voyage of discovery. It set him puzzling how far those fragrant loads had come, and by what means he might gain access to the remote places whence they had been brought.

Much of his experiences, possibly some of his aspirations too, were no doubt told by the father to his three boys; and, if so, it is no wonder that young Sebastian grew up filled with sea dreams, and sea-going intentions.

In the frequent absence of his merchant-father there would be plenty to keep the fire of his ambition

burning brightly. He had not, indeed, like boys of to-day, a shelf-full of books about the wide world and its wonders, with graphic pictures supplementing the letterpress; but for him there were sources of information even more interesting. He had only to go down to the busy quays where the ships were unloading, and talk with the bronzed sailors lounging and gossiping in the sunshine.

For Venice, though she was on the eve of her decline, was still a great and bustling seaport. The Grand Canal bristled with masts. Argosies as rich as those which Shakespeare's Antonio was master of, and small coasters from many a blue harbour in the Mediterranean, were ever coming and going; while the overland trade with the East, of which she had long had the monopoly, was not yet superseded by the sea-borne commerce of her Portuguese rivals.

Young Sebastian must have been about eighteen years of age when his nautical dreams and fancies were broken in upon by a great *fact*. There came to Venice the news of the famous voyage successfully completed by the Genoese Columbus. An easy and direct way to Asia *viâ* the West had been discovered, so it was said, and the outlying islands explored. All Venice, all Western Europe, was in a flutter of excitement.

It is not known where John Cabot was when he

heard the report, but it seems to have stirred him deeply. He himself was by birth a Genoese, though he had qualified himself by fifteen years of residence to be a Venetian citizen. He himself, too, could lay claim to proficiency in the art of navigation, and the passion of discovery was strong upon him. Why, therefore, he asked himself, should *he* not turn to higher account his knowledge and skill?

Business affairs were put aside, and, hurrying off to Seville and to Lisbon, he proceeded to gather information and to solicit help. Shortly afterwards he came to England, settling as a merchant in London. He brought with him his Venetian wife, and his three sons, Lewis, Sebastian, and Sancio. The scheme of a voyage to the far West was ripening in his brain, and quite early in 1496 he laid his project before the English King. The opportunity was a favourable one. The news from Spain had had time to sink deep into the thoughts of both sovereign and people, and there was a desire to emulate what Columbus had done.

When, therefore, an expert navigator, of the same breed as the hero of 1492, and able to talk learnedly of the new route to Cipango, presented himself at the Court of Westminster, he was warmly received and readily listened to.

Henry's avarice was as much pleased by the visions of spice-laden ships wafted to his shores as his shrewd-



ness was satisfied by the evident ability of his visitor, and the maps and charts with which he explained his plans.

There was a show of deliberation on the part of the royal patron ("His Majesty, who is wise and not prodigal," as an Italian letter-writer mildly describes him); but John Cabot soon had the papers of commission in his hands. As so few documents about the Cabots have come down to us, perhaps a copy of the exact words of the order may be interesting. It is dated March 5th, 1496 (Old Style):—

"**L**ET it be known and made manifest that we have given and conceded, and by these presents do give and concede, for us and our heirs, to our well-beloved John Cabottus, citizen of Venice, and to Ludovicus, Sebastianus, and Sanctus, sons of the said John, and to the heirs and assigns of them and each of them and their deputies, full and free authority, faculty, and power of navigating to all parts, countries, and seas of the east, west, and north, under our banners, flags, and ensigns, with five ships or vessels of what burden or quality soever, and with as many mariners or men as they will have with them in the said ships, upon their own proper costs and charges: to seek out, discover, and find whatsoever islands, countries, regions, or provinces of heathens or infidels, in whatever part of the world they be, which before this time were unknown to all Christians."

And so on for five paragraphs more, in the usual wordy and precise manner of legal documents. The adventurers were empowered to occupy, and if need be conquer, any new lands, in the name of the King of England. If any profits accrued from the expedition, a fifth part was to go to the King. A monopoly—*i.e.*

sole and exclusive rights—should belong to the Cabots not only for trading with, but even for visiting, the said land or lands. All English subjects are charged to render assistance to the voyagers in whatever way it was needed; and the order is signed thus:—

“Witnessed by the King at Westminster, on the 5th day of March, in the eleventh year of his reign.

“By the King himself.”

The famous port of Bristol, ancient even then, was chosen by Cabot as the place whence the expedition should start, and preparations went slowly on. The good ship *Matthew* was fitted out, and a crew of eighteen men were engaged for the voyage, the greater part being Englishmen and natives of Bristol. The letters patent gave orders for “five ships” to be got ready, and it would seem from another document that three or four well-laden merchantmen (the ventures of certain London traders) were to accompany Cabot; but there is nothing to prove that any but the one vessel really sailed on that memorable quest.

Considering on what a small scale the expedition was planned, it seems to have been strangely slow in completion. By the day of departure everybody in Bristol must have got to know the purpose and destination of the stout little ship, and have awaited with some curiosity the arrival of the foreigner who was to

take command. At last he came and with him a young fellow of some two and twenty. This was Sebastian, his second son, to whom reference has already been made; neither of his brothers, who are mentioned in the Royal permit, appear to have sailed.

On May 2nd, 1497, the *Matthew* left port, and, running down channel, stood out to sea.

When the southern coast of Ireland faded away on the starboard bow there was no land between the pigmy bark and America. There was need, therefore, of stoutness of heart on the part of those eighteen mariners. Of the dark-faced Venetian, who was their captain, they probably knew little; and if the belief he entertained should prove to be more fad and fancy, what might not happen? Most likely, however, these tough fellows entered into the adventure with as much spirit as their descendants were to show in similar voyages a century later. For even in 1497 an Italian could write to the Duke of Milan, his master, speaking confidently of the sailors of Bristol as having the reputation of being "great seamen."

Slowly across the waste of waters, for fifty days, the little clumsy vessel ploughed her way. The direction she kept was due west, but as she neared the unknown land the current must have bent the straight line of her course, deflecting it slightly to the south, perhaps by some two hundred miles.

The darkness of a night in June closed in upon sky and ocean. It was Midsummer Eve, and it was the eve of a great discovery. As the shadows deepened, and the ship's lantern gleamed more brightly for the surrounding gloom, the Bristol men gathered in knots about the deck, chatting in the warm summer darkness. The thoughts of some, especially the younger ones, wandered no doubt to the fair home-land that now lay seven hundred leagues astern. What was happening in the flower-scented lanes and on the village greens from Avon to Thames that night? A red-letter date in the rustic calendar of Old England was Midsummer Eve, and well might they sigh at having to spend it on the lonely seas. There would be merrymaking in every town and hamlet. Great bonfires would be crackling and blazing, and a ring of dancers would encircle them. There would be wrestling and other sports to watch or to join in. The girls would be wearing their brightest kirtles, and there would be garlands and fresh herbs to scatter, and pipe and tabor and singing. And then, as midnight drew near, couples would link hands, and, according to time-honoured custom, leap through the stinging wood-smoke over the dying fires. Ah, it would be pleasant to be back that night "in merrie England."

So came and went Midsummer Eve, 1497, for the mariners of the good ship *Matthew* of Bristol. Dawn

broke early, and in the quiet grey light, to the joy of all on board, a dim coast-line was in sight.

What this coast really was is a question that has

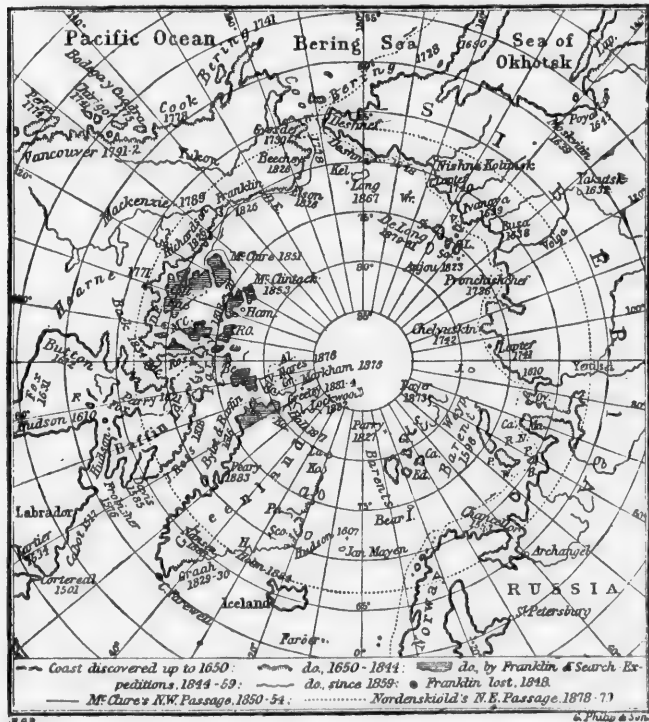


CHART OF THE NORTHERN SEAS SHOWING VOYAGES FROM 1497 A.D.

not been intelligently decided until recently. A map and globe prepared by John Cabot are lost, likewise a map by Sebastian, which was drawn half a century later; but of this latter chart one copy has survived.

From this it seems clear that the *Prima Terra Vista* (land first seen), as the place is called in the map, must be the northern end of Cape Breton. Another large island, sighted on the same day, and named St. John's (Midsummer Day is St. John's Day), corresponds to the position of the Magdalen Islands. The dense mists which prevail on the coast of Newfoundland must have concealed that great island, the southern end of which lay so near.

A boat's crew landed on the lonely shores, and Cabot hoisted the banner of England in token of possession. Not forgetting, too, his Venetian citizenship, he unfurled beside King Henry's flag another emblazoned with the lion of St. Mark.

If any native eyes looked from the pine woods upon the strangers, no sign of their presence was observed. But traces of human residents were detected later, in the shape of snares set for catching the wild creatures of the forest, and a primitive needle for making nets; also several trees were found to have been notched. Nothing else could be discovered, so the boat's crew pulled back to the ship.

Fearing lest his stock of provisions should give out, and being anxious to return with the good news, Cabot relinquished the thought of further researches, and the homeward voyage was begun. "Two islands to the right" were noticed after a run of some seventy miles,

and then, heading eastward, the *Matthew* crossed the Atlantic once more. The passage only occupied thirty-five days, and early in August the adventurers dropped anchor in Bristol waters.

The welcome accorded to Cabot, on presenting himself at Westminster with the report of his journey, seems to have been a warm one. In a letter written about this time, and found among the State Papers of Venice, the following reference occurs:—"Our Venetian who went with a small ship from Bristol has returned. . . . The King has been much pleased. . . . The King has promised for another time ten armed ships as he desires . . . and has given him money to amuse himself till then. . . . He is called the Great Admiral, great honour being paid to him, and he goes dressed in silk."

Among the Privy Purse Accounts of Henry VII. there is one interesting item. It is entered thus:—

"10th Aug. 1497. To hym that founde the new isle, £10."

With the envoy of the Duke of Milan, Cabot seems to have had very friendly intercourse, becoming quite confidential at times. To him the old sea captain spoke enthusiastically of the teeming supply of fish which the seas held on that far-off coast, and which his crew had tasted. He believed that, if fisheries could be established there, England would no longer have need of going to Iceland for that commodity.

He also praised the temperate climate, and stated his belief that the spice countries could be reached by penetrating further.

Not much time elapsed between Cabot's return and the issuing of a royal order for a second expedition. These authorised "our well-beloved John Kabotto, Venician," to select and fit out six ships, not exceeding 200 tons burden, "and theym convey and lede to the Londe and Iles of late founde by the seid John in oure name."<sup>1</sup>

Bristol was again the port chosen, and the five ships were away in or before the month of July, 1498. Sebastian probably accompanied his father; the former was about twenty-three years of age, the latter over sixty. Two of the vessels were commanded by London men, Thos. Bradley and Lancelot Thirkell by name, to whom King Henry had lent the necessary means. The fleet was furnished with food for one year.

A northerly course was steered at first. A great gale which they encountered drove one of the ships back to the Irish coast in a crippled condition; the

<sup>1</sup> This and other statements show pretty conclusively that to Cabot the father, and not Cabot the younger, belongs the honour of these North American discoveries. It is not pleasant to find that Sebastian, after his father's death, tried to fix that honour upon himself, wilfully misrepresenting facts. It is only recently that the truth has been laid bare.





ON THE NEWFOUNDLAND COAST.



rest seem to have continued their journey. High latitudes were reached ere long, the cold increased,

"And ice, mast high, came floating by,  
As green as emerald."

Here, in July, "continuall daylyght" was experienced. This was cheering to the mariners; but the wooden sides of the ships of those old days were too frail to risk the chances of the ice-grip, and Cabot turned, and bore southward and westward, running down the Newfoundland "banks."

These banks, famous now for nearly four hundred years, and still the scene of one of the greatest fisheries in the world, are swept by the cold Labrador current. This it is which brings the fish and the seals from the North, and many an iceberg drifts in, too, and gets stranded in the shallows. A cloud of fog, generated by the warm breath of the Gulf Stream, lies over the banks, which stretch for three hundred miles in a south-easterly direction.

Along this now far-famed coast Cabot's little fleet came sailing, the men marvelling at the prodigal way in which Nature had stocked the waters with fish—and such fish! So dense were the shoals, we are told, that "they sometymes stayed his shypes." *Bacallaos* he called them, which is the Basque word for cod. Swarms of sea-birds, too, floating or diving, perching or flying, filled the air with their hoarse cries.

Conspicuous among them was a bird whose eggs are now a golden prize to the naturalist—the great auk—which was then to be seen in thousands on rock-ledge and strand. Now it is gone for ever.



"SWARMS OF SEA-BIRDS FILLED THE AIR WITH  
THEIR HOARSE CRIES."

Whether Cabot landed, and if so, at what points, we are not told; but it is likely that one or more of the succession of fine bays which indent the coast attracted him. Beautiful they are, many of them, with green

islets dotting their calm expanse. From their lofty and craggy cliffs the dark forests slope down to the water's edge, and the winding silver of the sea runs in for many a mile. The wide-winged eagles sail above the inland solitudes that are scarcely less lonely than in Cabot's day; and the wolf and the black bear still lurk among the pine woods.

An inscription on Sebastian Cabot's map of 1544 mentions the presence of "very large stags, like horses," which may mean moose, to which the description well applies, or reindeer, of which great herds still exist in Newfoundland.

The fish-hunting habits of the white bear are elsewhere described: "Plungeing themselves into the water where they perceive a multitude of these fyshes to lye, they fasten theyr clawes in theyr scales, and so drawe them to lande and eate them; so that, the Beares, beyng thus satisfied with fyshe, are not noysome (harmful or dangerous) to men."

More interesting to the mariners were the natives, numbers of whom were seen during this second visit. They were clad in the skins of animals, and seemed to be not lacking in intelligence. Bows and arrows, slings and spears, were in use among them.

Continuing his course southward, Cabot seems to have traced the North American coast-line as far at least as Cape Hatteras—one account says as far even as

Florida—when his failing stores obliged him to hasten back to England.

Over the conclusion of this memorable voyage the curtain drops. The fleet was expected home by September; but when it actually arrived, and when and where John Cabot died, is not known. Nothing further is recorded.

The work of the old voyager was continued by others. In 1501 three Bristol merchants, Warde, Ashurst, and Thomas, were authorised to visit Newfoundland, and the Atlantic was again crossed. It is thought that Sebastian Cabot took charge of this venture. His after life was more eventful and more full of strange adventures than his father's. But to the latter belongs the honour and glory of that useful voyage which showed to Englishmen that the New World could be reached without crossing the track of a Spanish keel.

## TO THE LAND OF THE ESKIMO

THE THREE VOYAGES OF MARTIN FROBISHER

1576-1578



THAT the attempt to reach the North Pole is to us, the search for the North-West Passage was to our countrymen three hundred years ago.

It was their general belief that America was an island, but the size and shape of it was still only imperfectly known. That there was a water-way round the southern end of the great continent had been proved by Magellan, who had passed through the straits which have since borne his name. Now the question was, Did a similar water-way exist at the northern end?

To these forefathers of ours it was a question of intense interest and very great importance. If a passage for ships could be discovered, the merchants

of our northerly country hoped to be able to reach Asia—to get at “Cathay” and the spice-bearing islands—by a quick route, without crossing the sea-paths of the Portuguese and the Spaniards.

It was their belief, moreover, that America (they had not yet learned to think of it as two immense continents joined together by a ribbon of land) tapered to a point northward as it did southward. They little realised how the northern continent spread itself out into the cold Arctic seas, and with what a network of islands it ended.

The honour of being the first to set sail in search of this North-West Passage rests with the English, and pre-eminently with Martin Frobisher.

He had thought much upon the subject. A Yorkshire boy, with a London training, he had already learned the handling of a ship, and, doubtless, even in the days of his trading trips to the West African Coast, his heart had inclined towards those dreary seas where the sunshine was dim and pale, but the glory of pioneering would be great. For fifteen long years no opportunity offered. No well-to-do burgher was adventurous enough to lend him money for the attempt.

At last, “perceiving that hardly he was hearkened unto of the merchants,” who, he says bitterly, never looked at a brave enterprise unless they could see in it





MARTIN FROBISHER.



"sure, certain, and present gains," he laid the matter before the great personages of the Court. His scheme seems to have been favourably received, and one of the nobles, the Earl of Warwick, came forward to supply his wants.

One cannot read without a thrill the simple words which relate how Frobisher's expedition was prepared. "By little and little, with no small expense and pain, he brought his cause to some perfection, and drew together so many adventurers and such sums of money as might defray a reasonable charge to furnish himself to sea withal. He prepared two small barks of twenty and five and twenty tons apiece, wherein he intended to accomplish his voyage."

Think of it, reader! Realise the quiet courage that enabled these sea-going ancestors of ours to start on such a quest with means so poor and rude—attempting to solve the great problem of their day in a frail little wooden vessel of five and twenty tons!

On the 7th of June, 1576, the two barks, the *Gabriel* and the *Michael*, accompanied by a pinnace of 10 tons burden, dropped down the Thames from Ratcliffe to Deptford, where an accident to the pinnace detained them. Proceeding past Greenwich Palace, a salute was fired, and was acknowledged by the Queen in person. With that wise graciousness which made the gentlemen and commoners of England alike her devoted slaves, she came to the windows and

waved the adventurers a farewell. She also despatched one of her attendants to assure the crews of her hearty good wishes, and invited their commander to come and bid her adieu.

Gravesend was left behind on the 12th of June, and away into the north-west went the tiny fleet. On the 11th of July a jagged coast-line rose before them with the afternoon light upon its crags and spires. This was Greenland. The ice lay thick along the shores, and Frobisher dared not venture in among those grinding masses. At times the dense mists that haunt that region almost blotted out the sun—

“And all the night, through fog-smoke white,  
Glimmered the pale moonshine.”

Then would come fear and anxiety to relieve the monotony of the cold watch on deck.

Stormy weather shortly ensued, and the little pinnace went down, with the four seamen aboard her. The crew of the *Michael* grew distrustful of the whole enterprise, and, to their shame, retraced their course, and carried back to England a false story of failure and wreck.

Not a whit disconcerted by these losses, Frobisher held on towards the North-West. His own ship had been roughly handled by the storm, the mast being sprung and the topmast blown away, but his cheerful courage never failed. Eagerly he watched for further

signs of land, and on July 20th the little island, lying to the north of what is now Resolution Island, was sighted, and loyally named "Queen Elizabeth's Foreland." Continuing in a northerly direction he passed another headland, and getting free of the dangerous drift ice, which he had previously encountered, he saw before him an opening towards the west. This opening, which still goes by the name of Frobisher Bay, he fondly imagined might be the long-sought water-way, the North-West Passage of his dreams. "The land upon his right hand as he sailed westward he judged to be the Continent of Asia, and there to be divided from the firm of America which lieth on the left hand over against the same." For this to have been the case Frobisher should have been some three thousand miles further on his way. As it was the land on his right was Baffin Land. It is not, however, for us to smile at his mistake. Those old voyagers won by pluck and endurance and painful experience what we of to-day learn easily from the printed page. All honour to them!

Proceeding with care and caution, the adventurers passed a great island of ice which suddenly split in twain, the two halves of the berg falling into the waves with a tremendous noise and commotion. Gales and calm, fog and clear weather, alternately prevailed, as the *Gabriel* picked her way along the desolate strait; and at times rapid currents sorely tried the helmsman's

skill. On August 14th, anchoring in a quiet cove, the mariners repaired and caulked their vessel, and refilled their water-butts.

Five days later they fell in with the Eskimo, and in this wise. The day was calm, and the captain and Christopher Hall, master of the *Gabriel*, rowed ashore with eight of the men. Wanting to ascertain if there were any signs of human life, they climbed a hill. Presently a number of small black objects were seen moving across the water. At first they were taken to be porpoises or seals; but as they came nearer they proved to be a fleet of *kayaks*, or native canoes. Paddling towards the beach where the seamen had landed, they attempted to steal the boat. With loud shouts the owners swooped down on the astonished thieves and saved their property.

Later on the natives were encouraged to come to the ship; this they did, bringing presents of salmon and raw flesh, some of which they greedily partook of, while the Englishmen stood round and stared at their uncouth gestures. They showed their agility by clambering about the rigging, and danced and tumbled and grimaced; and they were mightily pleased by presents of toys and trinkets given them on leaving.

The description of these Eskimo by the old chronicler is correct enough. He says: "They be like to Tartars, with long black hair, broad faces, and flat noses, and tawny in colour, wearing sealskins, and so do the

women, not differing in the fashion; but the women are marked in the face with blue streaks down the cheeks and round about the eyes." Of the *kayaks* he adds: "Their boats are made all of sealskin, with a keel of wood within the skin; the proportion of them is like a Spanish shallop, save only they be flat in the bottom and sharp at both ends."

The natives, however, were treacherous as well as timid. One of them having to be put ashore after a visit to the ship, the boat's crew, instead of landing him at a solitary point as the captain had advised, took him direct to his friends, who straightway captured the five sailors and carried them off as prisoners.<sup>1</sup> Their comrades on board, having no other boat, could not come to their rescue, and, after waiting as long as seemed of any use, they were compelled to sail away. But not without retaliating; for an Eskimo was decoyed to the ship's side by a tinkling bell, and was snatched up and dragged on board. "Whereupon," we are told "when he found himself in captivity, for very choler and disdain he bit his tongue in twain within his mouth; notwithstanding, he died not thereof, but lived

<sup>1</sup> A tradition about these unfortunate men seems to have been handed down among the Eskimo, for, as Mr. Edward J. Payne notes, a story was told to an American explorer, who visited those regions three hundred years later, of how the white men had built and rigged a boat, with timber left by Frobisher on his third voyage, and had sailed homewards down the Strait. If this tradition be true, they must have lost their way or been wrecked, for they never were heard of more.

until he came into England, and then he died of cold which he had taken at sea."

This act of Frobisher's was not done out of mere spite. He wanted some token of his outland journeyings to show to his patrons at home; and this ruddy-faced, narrow-eyed savage would be a living proof which no one could gainsay. Indeed, the possession of this prize seems to have decided him to return. Accordingly the ship's head was pointed towards home, and, by Greenland and the Orkneys, the *Gabriel* ran down through the September sunshine into English waters, reaching Harwich on the 2nd of October.

Frobisher was well received, and congratulations poured in upon him. It was felt that his intrepid voyage had done something to bring England and "far Cathay" nearer together. But the value of his geographical discoveries was soon forgotten in an exciting speculation.

It happened that when the barriers of ice were seen lying along the shores of that distant Strait, the captain had told his men that, at the very first opportunity of getting ashore, they were to gather something, however trifling, as a token of new land reached. When the opportunity came, some plucked up grass, some picked flowers, and one man brought away a piece of stone resembling a lump of coal. On arriving home, the man was asked by his friends, "And what did *you* bring away?" He showed them the stone, breaking



off pieces and distributing them as curiosities and keepsakes. But one lady experimented with her portion, testing its hardness in the fire. When taken out and cooled in vinegar, it appeared speckled with little glittering particles of gold. Expectation awoke. The stone was submitted to certain London refiners. They all declared it to be of no worth, but an Italian expert



ESKIMO IN THEIR KAYAKS.

pronounced otherwise. The latter seems to have been right; it was a piece of iron pyrites, a mineral which does often contain a trifling amount of gold.

The story of the little black stone reads like one of the fairy tales of our childhood; but, like many of the lucky finds described in those tales, it proved a most unlucky possession to everyone concerned. In this

case, extravagant hopes were aroused. The dreary land away in the North-West might turn out to be an Eldorado, a land of golden treasure; and the formidable icebergs ranged along the coast, the enchanted giants who guarded that treasure.

There was a ready response to Frobisher's call for crews, and a second time he conducted a squadron of three ships from the Thames. They consisted of the *Gabriel* and the *Michael* and the *Aid*, "a tall ship of 200 ton," contributed by the Queen herself, who held a share in the venture. On Whit-Monday morning, May 27, 1577, a farewell ceremony took place at Gravesend. According to the simple, devout custom of those days, officers and seamen partook together of the sacrament, and prepared themselves, "as good Christians towards God and resolute men, for all fortunes."

The first sunrise of June saw the ships fairly on their way north. The seventh saw their sails furled in a harbour of the Orkneys.

The gentlemen who had chosen to accompany the expedition were doubtless not sorry to stretch their limbs on *terra firma* once more. But when these and the sailors with their empty watercasks stepped ashore, the islanders fled out of their rude houses, imagining the newcomers to be pirates—a not uncommon danger in those days. Being reassured they came down to traffic with their visitors in a friendly manner.

THE WILD BEAR COAST OF THE ORKNEYS.





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In those days, an Orkney islander was as much a foreigner in the eyes of an English sailor as nowadays an Icclander would be. Very poor and very ignorant were these natives, their food being chiefly oaten bread and fish and ewe's milk, their dress of the roughest and scantiest description and their habits little better than those of savages. The interiors of their cabins were begrimed with the smoke of their peat fires, there being no chimney to allow it to escape. On one side of the dwelling the family, whether small or numerous, herded together; on the other were stalled the cattle belonging to the owner. Cast-off clothing, fragments of rope, and leather articles were eagerly accepted in lieu of money payment for such necessaries as the seamen required.

Once more the fleet set sail, and, steering westward, fell in with three English fishing smacks returning from Iceland. By these the sailors were enabled to send home letters to their friends. When the brown sails disappeared astern, twenty-six days without glimpse of land or human faces were in store for the adventurers.

Floating by on the great expanse of waters they saw many goodly pine trees, loosened, maybe, from some wooded steep and carried away by the waves, into which they had fallen, but—no land. The white wings of the seabirds enlivened the solitude wherein, to the eyes of the lonely mariners, they seemed so strangely

at home. Through the brine came swimming many a monstrous fish. "Sea-shouldring whales," as Edmund Spenser finely calls them, in his great poem (written only a few years after the date of our story),<sup>1</sup> rolled and dived and spouted on every hand, now singly, now in schools, but still no land.

Day succeeded night, and night followed day, but bringing no darkness in those high latitudes. "We had," says one of the company, "easily and without any impediment, when we were so disposed, the fruition of our books and other pleasures—a thing of no small moment to such as wander in unknown seas and long navigations." What a picture that calls up!—those Elizabethan voyagers grouped about the deck reading their brown leather-covered books, without lamp or candle, far on into the night. One is curious to know what books they were. That copies of the Scriptures were among the number may be safely presumed. How we should prize a stray volume which we knew had been out on that old-time voyage!

At last, certain outlying islands of ice were descried, the depths under the ship's keel grew black and smooth, and finally, on the 4th of July, the Greenland coast was sighted.

It was a forbidding scene enough. The high mountains were shrouded in snow, and at times the fall of

<sup>1</sup> *The Faerie Queen* (bk. ii. canto xii. ver. 23), written between 1580 and 1590.

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an avalanche broke the dead silence. The icebergs bordering the shore drifted in frequent collision, grinding and jamming; and Frobisher, thrice essaying to slip in between them, had to give up an attempt fraught with so much danger. A more cheering feature was the presence of little land-birds which perched on the rigging; this seemed to hint that the country inland was not as wintry as the coast. Some good sport was had with the fishing-lines let down, a huge halibut providing the sailors with very satisfying food. The icebergs themselves proved useful, for when morsels were melted it was found that the water thus obtained was not salt nor even brackish; the bergs had apparently been carried down from some river mouth.

Four days reconnoitring along this inhospitable shore tried even Frobisher's patience, and he resolved to bear out to sea and run for the Straits discovered in the previous year, and bearing his name. In so doing, he encountered storms and bitterly cold weather, which seemed at strange variance with the summer-like length of daylight.

On reaching and searching the small island where the black stone had been picked up, no further supply could be found, but there was plenty to be had on adjacent islets. Wishing to explore more thoroughly, and gain a better knowledge of the Eskimo people, the captain went ashore one Friday, taking with him some forty of his company. Among the latter were many

gentlemen and soldiers. Owing to the treacherous habits of the natives all went armed. A survey from a hill-top showed the whole region to be rugged and barren-looking, and the party was descending to the shore when they were hailed by some of the Eskimo. Some shy trafficking took place, and gifts were exchanged; but the meeting ended in a fight, entirely provoked (so it seems to us) by the English. Ever intent on gaining more information, the captain appears to have thought it quite justifiable to kidnap any of the natives, when a chance occurred, for training as interpreters. These high-handed proceedings were naturally resented; bows were bent, and after a flight of arrows the islanders fled. The soldiers in their armour were no match in running for the Eskimo, but a fleet-footed Cornish wrestler, Nicholas Conyer by name, overtook one of them, grappled with him and secured him.

Returning to the ships, the adventurers sailed slowly on through the perilous floating ice. The finding of a dead narwhal, some twelve feet in length, excited much interest—a sea unicorn the sailors called it. The long tapering horn was cut off, and eventually presented to the Queen.

Frobisher and his men were anxious to learn whether their comrades, seized a year ago by the Eskimo, were still alive. It was suggested, by signs, to the captive, that these unfortunate men had been killed and eaten; but this he vigorously denied. That such might, how-



ever, have been the case seemed likely when an odd assortment of clothing, of English make, was found in some deserted tents among "raw and new-killed flesh of unknown sorts." It was a grim probability.

An attempt was made to cut off and capture a number of the natives, but the only result was a fierce contest, in which several of the English were wounded. Many of their opponents, when shot, saved themselves from capture by drowning, "with deadly fury casting themselves headlong from off the rocks." One old woman, who was so hideous that the superstitious sailors believed she must be a witch, was caught and allowed to hobble away; but a younger woman and her child were taken and brought away to the ships.

A letter penned by Frobisher, and addressed to the five missing men, was placed where the natives might fetch it, in the hopes that it would fall into the right hands. It assured the men of his anxiety to rescue them, and bade them arrange their own exchange for the three prisoners now detained as hostages. But the days passed and no answer came.

Continual vigilance had to be observed, especially at night, in case the ships' boats should be cut adrift and stolen, or the hostages escape. A small fort was built, and military rules were enforced; and the visitors and the inhabitants watched each other's movements suspiciously, like angry cats.

The description, which one of our accounts contains,

of the Eskimo, as our countrymen saw them three hundred years ago, may be compared with that given by modern travellers. "The men are of large corporature (big build) and good proportion; their colour is not much unlike the sunburnt countryman who laboureth daily in sun for his living. They wear their hair something long, and cut before with stone or knife, very disorderly. . . They eat their meat all raw . . . or parboiled with blood and a little water, which they drink. For lack of water, they will eat ice that is hard frozen, as pleasantly as we will do sugar candy, or other sugar. . . They neither use table, stool, or table-cloth for comeliness; but when they are imbrued with blood, knuckle-deep, and their knives in like sort, they use their tongues as apt instruments to lick them clean." In fact, they were what one of the narrators calls them, "savages," and, as he shrewdly guesses "anthropophagi" also, *i.e.* cannibals.

We are told that they were dressed in skins sewn together with sinews. In cold weather they wore the fur side inward, and in summer outward. Their weapons were rude, and their arrows not effective, except at close range. Their *kayaks* are thus described: "They have two sorts of boats made of leather, set out on the inner side with quarters of wood. . . The greater sort are not much unlike our wherries, wherein sixteen or twenty men may sit; they have for a sail dressed the guts of such beasts as

they kill, very fine and thin, which they sew together. The other boat is but for one man to sit and row in, with one oar." Reference is also made to their roaming, unsettled mode of life, and to the famous dog-teams which have been employed by so many of our Arctic explorers since that day.

August was not far advanced before the increasing cold warned the adventurers that it was time to be getting back into more southerly latitudes. The work of digging and carrying aboard great quantities of the ore had been proceeding apace, the men—soldiers and gentlemen alike with the miners—working well. By the 21st of August the task was finished, all hands being wearied out. Two hundred tons of pyrites were stowed away, and the next day, having lit a big bonfire on the highest hill and fired a salute which reverberated far and wide among the mountains, the little fleet sailed away.

A curious story is told of a young seaman, William Smith, "master" of the *Gabriel*. It was the 30th day of August, and a heavy sea was running. As he stood watching the great white-crested rollers, he was telling his captain in a laughing, light-hearted way about a dream he had had the previous night. He dreamed that he had fallen overboard, and that the boatswain had caught him by the hand, but could not save him. He had scarcely finished speaking when a lurch of the ship flung him into the sea, together with the boat-

swain, who had been standing by, no doubt an amused listener. The latter clutched him, holding on with his other hand to a loose rope, but the strain was too great, and he had to relax his grip. The boatswain was dragged back into the ship; the young master went down in the deep waters.

Several storms were encountered, and the fleet got scattered, but finally all reached port—one coming in to Milford Haven, one to Bristol, and one, which had steered round the north-east of Scotland, arriving safely at Yarmouth.

Frobisher's reception by the great Queen was most flattering and gracious, and the courage and hardihood shown by all in the late expedition was warmly commended. The region visited was named by Elizabeth herself, *Meta Incognita*—the boundary of the unknown; and arrangements were forthwith put in hand for establishing a colony there, the better to develop its supposed mineral riches.

The ore brought home by the three ships had been lodged partly in Bristol Castle and partly at the Tower of London. A sample of it when submitted to an assay or testing raised such high expectations that no doubt was felt that huge profits would result from this third and greater expedition.

It was decided that a party, numbering a hundred men, should be quartered in the newly-discovered land, of whom forty should be seamen for navigating the

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surrounding sounds and inlets, thirty should be miners, and thirty should be soldiers. The latter were to give protection to the others in the exercise of their duties; and "a strong fort or house of timber, cunningly devised *by a notable learned man here at home,*" was to be taken aboard in sections, and set up as a shelter and a citadel for those who were to winter in that ice-bound region.

The prospect offered to these hundred men was hardly a cheerful one; but there was a spice of romance about it, and plenty of volunteers came forward. Captains Fenton, Best, and Philpot were to have charge of this contingent, and three ships of the fleet were to be left at their disposal for exploring trips, and as a means of escape if serious peril threatened the colony.

Compared with the two previous expeditions this was quite a big undertaking. No less than fifteen ships were to take part in it.

Full power was in the hands of Frobisher, who was a pretty severe disciplinarian, and the rules drawn up for the conduct of the voyage were strict enough. The first article ran thus: "I. Imprimis, to banish swearing, dice, and card-playing, and [foul talk], and to serve God twice a-day, with the ordinary service usual in churches in England." Two other regulations are interesting: "III. That no man shall by day or by night depart further from the admiral than the distance

of one English mile"; and "IX. That every ship in the fleet in the time of fogs, which continually happen with little winds, and most part calms, shall make a *reasonable noise* with trumpet, drum, or otherwise, to keep themselves clear one of another." It must have been comforting to the sailors, but not a little disconcerting to the coast tribes, to hear those strange noises coming muffled through the fog. Such unexplained sounds probably gave rise to many a weird story among the natives, of sea-monsters with bellowing throats and scaly folds rattling as they wound in and out among the ice.

An impressive incident marked the farewell interview between the great Queen and her redoubtable subject. The former spoke words of warm approval and encouragement, and as Frobisher knelt to kiss her hand, she laid "a fair chain of gold," about his neck. The day of departure was the 31st of May, 1578, and the port Harwich; but this time the route lay along the English Channel and the southernmost point of Ireland.

Off Cape Clear the admiral sighted a small vessel, which he suspected to be a corsair, and gave chase to it; but, instead of a piratical crew bent on mischief, the English found a sorry spectacle awaiting them. The ship was a Bristol bark, and she was full of dead and wounded men. The bloodstains on the deck, the empty water-casks, the gaunt, haggard faces, all told a pitiful tale.

It appeared that the crew had been attacked, robbed, and maltreated by some rascally Frenchmen, and the survivors, after drifting on the high seas without food, and too weak to navigate their vessel, were ready to perish. In those days the ocean was not crossed by thousands of ships in all directions, and it was fortunate indeed that the unhappy men fell in with Frobisher's fleet. Every assistance was given them by their countrymen, and food and drink were supplied them, ere the expedition proceeded on its way.

Here are the names of the ships composing the fleet: the Queen's "tall ship" the *Aid* (which carried the admiral), the *Thomas Allen* (bearing Captain York, the vice-admiral), the *Judith*, the *Anne Francis*, the *Hope-well*, the *Bear*, the *Thomas* of Ipswich, the *Emmanuel* of Exeter, the *Francis* of Foy, the *Moon*, the *Buss* of Bridgwater, the *Salamander* of Weymouth, the *Dionyse* or *Dennis*, the *Gabriel*, and the *Michael*. From which it would seem that the two ships of last year's voyage were now the smallest in point of size.

The rugged white hills of Greenland, familiar to the eyes of many among the crews, rose at last on the 20th day of June. No long stay was made here, *Meta Incognita* being the destination of the fleet. The latter accordingly sailed onward, meeting on the way many whales. One of these monsters had cause to rue the presence of the visitors, the hard nose of the *Salamander* butting it with such force that the ship

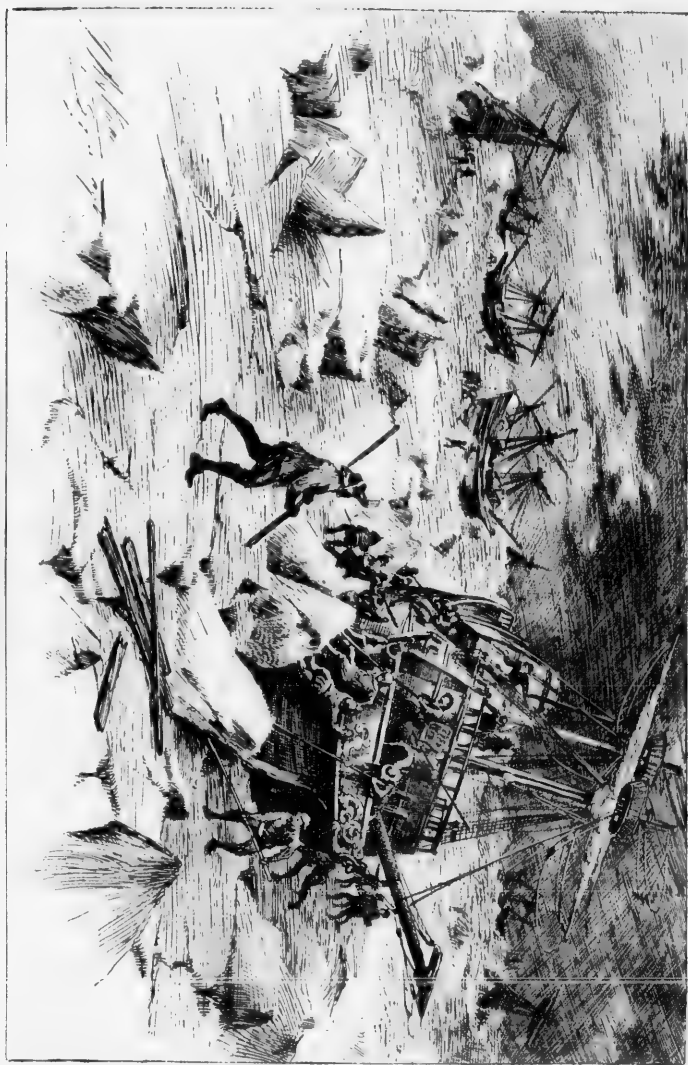
stood still. "Whereat," we are told, "the whale made a great and ugly noise," as well it might, "and cast up his body and tail, and so went under water." Two days later, the floating carcase of a dead whale was espied, and judged to be the one rammed by the ship.

As soon as the fleet got in among the floating ice, which lay between them and their destination, their troubles began.

The first disaster was the loss of the *Dennis*, a 100-ton ship, but already weakened by the ice-grip; she was struck by a berg, and sank so rapidly that none of her stores could be saved. Boats, launched from the nearest vessels, happily were in time to rescue her crew. Before the dismay caused by this incident had passed off, a storm which had been gathering burst with pitiless fury. The sea was churned up into white waves, and the crash and grinding of the bergs appalled even the stoutest hearts. Hope died, escape appeared impossible.

All, however, was done that could be done for avoiding the destruction which seemed so imminent. Each ship struck her topmasts and took in sail. Those which were riding where the water-way was fairly open contrived by skilful steering to dodge the drifting masses; others were seen boldly moored to the larger floes, making of the terrible glassy cliffs a shelter from the gale. Those around which the ice had gathered, pressing with sharp edges against the stout British oak,





CAUGHT IN THE GREENLAND ICE.



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were more helpless; but the indomitable fellows aboard took poles and pikes, oars and thick planks, and stood night and day fending off the white walls that threatened to enclose and crush them; some even "going out upon the ice to bear it off with their shoulders from the ship." When the pressure grew too great they hung coils of rope, mattresses, boards, and such like over the sides, and waited patiently for release. At night, to add to their dismay, a fog came down upon the scene.

The glimpse we get, in the old records, of these "mariners and poor miners" battling thus doggedly with the unfamiliar dangers of the Arctic Seas, prepares us to find them meeting with an audacity bordering on contempt the human terrors of the Armada, exactly ten years after.

Four of the ships, fast sailers, ran out into the open sea while yet there was time, choosing to be tossed hither and thither among the loose ice, rather than to be caught by the pack ice, where their sailing qualities would be of no avail. No sooner had they reached comparative safety than, with simple devoutness, their brave crews gathered around the mast, and kneeling down, gave thanks for their own deliverance, and prayed for their fellows who were still struggling with death. There were many bended knees, too, on the ice-bound ships, and, as if in direct answer to those earnest prayers, the gale dropped, the fog lifted with

the return of daylight, a light wind wafted the fleet into open water, and brighter and better weather than they had known for a long while completed the happiness of their relief.

Repairs were now diligently set going, and as the work of nailing and rigging and splicing went on apace, the tongues of the workers wagged merrily, each recounting the special incidents, grave or amusing, which had come under his notice during the late anxious time.

Early in July the sea fog returned, and prevailed for nearly a fortnight, and what with this, and the altered aspect of many of last year's landmarks (owing to the fallen snow), the fleet lost its bearings. None of the places along the coast could be identified, and one experienced mariner, who had accompanied Frobisher during the previous voyage, roundly declared that he had never set eyes on those shores before. To the bewildering mist was now added the presence of swift currents which swung the vessels round like chips in a mill-race. The noise, too, was startling; it reminded the Londoners of the rushing of the river between the piles of London Bridge—the old clumsy bridge of their day, under whose narrow arches the swollen Thames ran like a sluice.

It was a trying situation. The leaders of the expedition might well have been dismayed, and Frobisher most of all. But an idea seems to have presented

itself to him which tended to lessen his chagrin. Supposing this part, which none of his men recognised, was, after all, a new Strait! What if this should be the outlet leading round to Cathay. If the supposition did occur to him, his instructions did not allow of his satisfying himself on this point. He was in charge of a mining expedition—the North-West Passage must wait.

The truth was that Frobisher's foremost ships had got further to the south than was realised, and unwittingly he had discovered what is now known as Hudson's Strait—the sea-gate of that very North-West Passage on which his waking and sleeping thoughts so long had brooded. He had been carried some sixty leagues by the Strait.

It was time to turn back and find the real *Meta Incognita*, and with much difficulty this was effected. The dangers and hardships which the men had borne so long began to tell on them; murmurings were heard on all sides, and sickness spread through the fleet. Before the end of July blinding snowstorms filled the air, and the poor wearied fellows were wet to the skin.

A happier feeling was bred by the finding of one of the vessels, the *Gabriel*, which had got separated from the rest, and was given up for lost. Her crew had an exciting tale to tell of dangers encountered and hair-breadth escapes.

Arriving at last at the place of their search, which had been named the Countess of Warwick's Sound, Frobisher called a council of his captains. Mining operations were ordered to be commenced without further delay, and a large quantity of the "black earth" was dug up and carried on board the ships. But the project of establishing a winter camp was abandoned. Only part of the "fort" had survived the voyage; the remaining sections had gone down with the ill-fated *Dennis*, or had been used for fending off the ice. It was found that a new fort could not be built in time. Both provisions and fuel, moreover, were running short. All things rendered the plan of a colony no longer practicable.

A few final exploring trips were made by the admiral, Captain Best, and others.

Best had an adventure. He descried from a hill-top what he took to be an Eskimo settlement. Perceiving him, a party of men came out and waved to him with a flag—an English flag. Descending the hill, and rowing over to them as near as he deemed prudent, he was greeted by voices unmistakably English. "What cheer?" came the cry across the water. Best was reassured. "All's well!" he shouted back, and up went the men's caps, and the rocks rang with a glad shout of joy and relief. The men imagined him the survivor of some terrible calamity which had overtaken the fleet.

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In this and other ways the scattered ships were reunited, and, when most of the squadron had come together, a farewell service was conducted by the chaplain of the fleet, and instructions for the return journey were handed to the various captains.

It was none too soon. The night frosts sheathed the rigging in ice, which cut the hands like a knife. There was every chance of being shut in among the floes should the fleet delay longer. And so, with much difficulty, owing to the rough sea and boisterous wind, the departure took place.

By various routes, and with various mishaps, the sorely-bruised vessels reached England in the early days of October, some arriving at one port, some at another. The *Buss* of Bridgwater had the most adventurous voyage. She was left behind with a fair prospect of not getting away at all; but pluck and good seamanship overcame every obstacle, and, threading her way through a rock-encumbered channel, she reached the open water and struggled home.

## TO THE ISLES OF THE CARIB SEA

THE THREE VOYAGES OF SIR JOHN HAWKINS

1562-1568



DEVON may well be proud of the splendid set of seamen whom she bred and sent forth in "the spacious times of great Elizabeth."

It is hardly too much to say that to write the story of English enterprise on the seas three hundred years ago, is simply to relate the adventures of Devonshire captains and courtiers.

"It was good to be English then ; it was best to be West Countrie."

What a brilliant galaxy it was. that group of Devon worthies—Drake, the most daring of them all ; the astute Hawkins ; John Oxenham, whose story lives for ever in the pages of Kingsley ; Davis, whose name we connect with the Arctic seas ; Raleigh, courtier, adventurer and author ; Gilbert, whose end was nobler even



### *The Three Voyages of Sir John Hawkins* 133

than his life, and many another whose heart was as stout as his ship was small.

Sir John Hawkins was one of the most redoubtable of these. His name and that of Frobisher and Drake make up a trio known to every school-boy. Their share in the defeat of the Armada cannot be forgotten; but we must think of them also as great voyagers, men who knew how to handle their vessels in a storm quite as well as they knew how to train their guns on a foe.

There were three famous captains of this name: William Hawkins, the grandfather, who, in the days of Bluff King Hal, sailed thrice to Brazil; Sir John, the hero of these pages; and Sir Richard, whose gallant and eventful life would require a chapter to itself—three generations of seamen, all of whom won distinction.

The story of John Hawkins takes us away to the lovely West Indian Islands. The Spanish conquests in America had been pitiless and bloody. They had nearly exterminated the poor Caribs who once peopled the Islands, and disdaining to work their plantations themselves, the Spaniards had begun looking to Africa for supplies of negro labourers. The Portuguese had readily encouraged this export of slaves, for their own island colonies off the West African Coast made it easy for them to collect and ship batches of negroes from the villages on the mainland. Spanish gold was

already finding its way into the pockets of Portuguese shippers.

John Hawkins, of Plymouth, who had made several voyages to the Canary Islands, heard of this. The traffic in forced labour, so hateful to us modern folk, did not strike our forefathers as being wicked or even questionable. They knew that the negro was a lower being than the Carib, whose place he was to take, and that the only hope of saving the Indians from extinction was to furnish enough negroes to do the work. Therefore, was it not a humane project, apart from its profitableness to the carrier? Thus they reasoned, and John Hawkins saw no objection to trying for a share in so lucrative a trade.

Having persuaded certain well-to-do Londoners to assist him with loans, he fitted out three ships, the *Solomon* of 120 tons, the *Swallow* of 100 tons, and a little 40-ton bark, the *Jonas*. The crews were wisely restricted to a hundred men. The date of departure was October, 1562.

The young commander—he was only about thirty years of age, and had just wedded the daughter of no less a personage than the Treasurer of the Navy—proceeded first to Teneriffe, and crossed over to the Guinea Coast. Here he went to work to obtain, by capture or barter, a supply of negroes. Some three hundred were eventually got together, and, setting sail across the Atlantic, he arrived at the Island of San Domingo,

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then called Hispaniola. Calling at one port after another, he succeeded at last in disposing of his living freight. It was evidently a business needing sharp wits as well as a taste for bargaining. In those days a trader was apt to have his vessel seized on very slight pretext, and the Spaniards were both crafty and cruel. So John Hawkins went about his work warily, always making certain that he was in a position to fight his customers or to fly them. There was good reason for his caution, as we shall presently see.

When the time came for returning home, he found that he had done well. His three ships were crammed with sugar and ginger and pearls, besides a goodly store of hides, the surplus of which freighted two other vessels, which he placed under the charge of his subordinate, Captain Hampton, and sent across to Cadiz. As it turned out, these were pounced upon by the authorities there, before their cargoes could be sold. Hawkins, with his own three barks, reached England safely in September, 1563.

We know little or nothing more about this voyage, but it is memorable as being the first occasion on which English ships broke in upon the privacy of West Indian waters.

Of the second voyage undertaken by Hawkins, we have much fuller information. It was an interesting and eventful one. The squadron consisted of four

ships, the *Jesus* of Lubeck,<sup>1</sup> a bark of 700 tons, the *Solomon*, the *Tiger*, and the *Swallow*. Shares in the enterprise had been taken by many well-to-do merchants and gentlemen. The adventurers were, however, confronted by an awkward dilemma. Besides the high-handed treatment of the two cargoes despatched to Cadiz, there had been an order issued by the Spanish Government prohibiting the West Indian planters and traders from having any dealings with the English. Hawkins made light of this difficulty. Once there he would soon find means to evade or break through all restrictions.

So on the 18th of October, 1564, he sailed out of Plymouth harbour, and, falling in with two English merchantmen, bound likewise for the Guinea Coast, proceeded to the Canaries; thence, steering for the Cape Verde Islands, he obtained from them and from the African mainland a fairly large supply of negroes, though in one or two of his expeditions many of the sailors were killed.

A prolonged stay on the unhealthy coast was not desirable, and, several cases of fever having occurred,

<sup>1</sup> The *Jesus* of Lubeck had been originally purchased by Henry VIII. from the important trading town of Lubeck. She was still in the Royal Navy, and Hawkins probably got the loan of her through the influence of his father-in-law. Whether the *Swallow* was the same bark as the one mentioned as going on the first voyage is not quite clear. There is a discrepancy between the two narratives in regard to her tonnage and that of the *Solomon* also.

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the fleet stood out to sea on the 29th of January, and the voyage to the West Indies was commenced. It proved a tedious one. Calms and tornadoes were experienced, and the delay thus caused threatened the crews and their human cargoes with the unspeakable horrors of thirst in mid-ocean. On the 16th of February, however, the welcome trade-wind filled the flapping sails, and on Saturday, 9th of March, Dominica was reached.

The jealous decree of the Spanish Viceroy hindered commerce with the colonists, and Hawkins passed from port to port, and from island to island, doing very little business. He watered his ships at Santa Fé, and received from the natives presents of maize and sweet potatoes; in exchange for which beads and glasses, knives and pewter whistles were given.

The arrows of these Indians had proved very formidable to the invading Spaniards. The tips were steeped in the juice of certain apples, "very fair and red of colour, but a strong poison"—probably the deadly manchineel.

And so, sailing westward, Hawkins arrived early in April at Puerto Cabello (then called Burboroota) on the coast of Venezuela. Here he had much trouble to induce the Spaniards to trade. His stock of negroes included many who were "lean and sick, and like to die upon his hands"; it was desirable to get these poor creatures on *terra firma*, where they would have proper treatment and better food. The townsfolk hesitated and shuffled and parleyed, insisting, for one thing, on

the payment of the King's tax or duty on every slave sold. Their behaviour so angered Hawkins that he resolved to frighten them into a more reasonable mood. He armed a hundred of his men and marched them up to the town. The threat was enough, the slaves were sold, and on the 4th of May the ships weighed anchor and sailed away to Curaçoa.

Here the great numbers of cattle bred in the island astonished the visitors, who lost no time in taking on board a supply of fresh meat. Coasting along, they reached Rio de la Hacha, and finding here the same obstinacy as at Puerto Cabello, the English captain repeated his former device. At the approach of his boat's crew, a warlike display greeted him from the town, but a few cannon-shot scattered the prancing horsemen and silenced the noisy drums. Very soon there came a messenger riding out with a flag of truce, and an interview with the authorities ended in a free permission to trade.

To us it is most amusing to watch the progress of this redoubtable merchant-adventurer, this truculent sea-captain, alternately bargaining and threatening—his hand as ready to fly to his sword-hilt as to sign contracts. But the men of those days did not mince matters. Once away from the orderly staid life of counting-house and mart, the trader was not too scrupulous in his methods of lightening his ships and filling his purse.



"VERY SOON THERE CAME A MESSENGER RIDING OUT WITH A FLAG  
OF TRUCE,"





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The river at La Hacha swarmed with alligators. A queer fancy was believed concerning this creature. Says the old historian, "His nature is ever, when he would have his prey, to cry and sob like a Christian body, to provoke them to come to him, and then he snatches at them." Hence, he says, the phrase, "crocodiles' tears," as applied to any show of grief which is unreal and made for a purpose.

More dangerous were the treacherous schemes of the Spaniards at this place. But Hawkins was wariness itself, and on May 31st, having finished his business, he sailed away across the open seas to Jamaica.

Touching at "The Dry Tortugas," low-lying, sandy islets, where the sailors went turtle-catching, they steered for Havana on the Cuba Coast. This place they overshot, and beating back towards the Cape of Florida, in order to refill their almost empty water-casks, they got roughly handled by a storm. Two boats with twenty-one men were away at the time searching for springs on the neighbouring islands, and the gale separated them from the ships. The poor fellows were almost in despair when they were picked up. It was well for them that they had not run for the mainland, as they had almost decided to do; for the natives were warlike and savage. Indeed, a friar who had ventured among them to persuade them to submit to the Spaniards, had been carried off by them, "and his skin pulled over his ears and his flesh eaten."

So says Richard Eden in his *Decades of the New World*, printed in 1555.

The ships proceeded leisurely along the Florida coast, anchoring every night. Two things Hawkins wanted—to obtain a supply of fresh water and to ascertain the whereabouts of a certain French settlement.

At last, up the St. John's River the latter was discovered. Very beautiful was this Florida country to the eyes of the English adventurers, "marvellously sweet, with both marish and meadow ground, and goodly woods among." The vineyards bore grapes of tempting size and luscious taste, and the soft eyes of the deer stared wonderingly at the intruders where the forests reached down to the sands.

The Frenchmen were friendliness itself. When the four strange ships were seen approaching, it was feared that they were Spaniards; but on discovering who the visitors were, the colonists were overjoyed. They provided guides to point out the best watering place, and entertained Hawkins and his officers within their fort, although to provide the feast the Governor, Monsieur Laudonnière, had to kill the little remnant of sheep and poultry which he had been preserving to stock the country with.

Hawkins, on his part, proved a veritable saviour to these unfortunate settlers. They had a doleful tale to tell. It appeared that they had been located there

for some fourteen months. The food supply had quickly shown signs of giving out, and only a limited quantity of maize-corn could be bought from the Indians. There was plenty of fish in the river, but the soldiers scornfully refused to procure their own food, and their cruelty and rapacity only scared away the natives or changed them into revengeful enemies. A large number of the more insubordinate spirits deserted and sailed away to get their living by piracy. There was only ten days' food remaining in the fort when Hawkins arrived.

Boat-loads of bread and wine were at once sent to the settlers' relief, and an offer of free transport to France being declined, Hawkins sold them one of his vessels, the *Tiger*, and generously pressed upon them numerous gifts from his ships' stores. July was ending before he finally bade the grateful colonists farewell. Owing to many a contrary wind and many a dead calm his homeward voyage was unduly prolonged, and it was the 20th of September before the Cornish cliffs rose in sight, and the ships came gliding into Padstow Harbour.

Hawkins himself has left us an account of the third voyage. He went in the *Jesus* of Lubeck, and with him sailed five other vessels of smaller size—the *Minion*, the *William and John*, the *Judith*, of which Francis Drake was captain, the *Angel*, and the *Swallow*.

They left Plymouth on the 2nd October, 1567, but such terrible storms beat upon them before they had

cleared the Bay of Biscay that the captains were on the point of turning back and relinquishing the voyage. But the wind dropped ere long, and under fair skies they ran on to the Cape Verde Islands. Here an attempt was made to kidnap some of the natives, but the adventurers got more wounds than victims, and many a Devon man lay between decks dying with burning veins and locked teeth, thanks to the poisoned arrows.

But the tribal wars of the natives on the mainland gave the English a better chance, and, by aiding one dusky chief against his neighbour, they obtained a goodly share of the captives.

By the 3rd of February, 1568, having collected about four or five hundred negroes, the course was laid for the West Indies. A bad passage was made, and the month of March was drawing to a close before the weather-beaten fleet reached Dominica.

Again they had trouble with the authorities at Rio de la Hacha. This time the town had been fortified, and a hundred arquebus men were in readiness to enforce the rule, "No trade with the English." However, Englishmen of the stamp of John Hawkins were not to be frightened by a show of force. He was determined to turn his negro cargo into money, and a landing party of two hundred resolute fellows rushed the defences, and entered the town with but little loss. The townsmen, pretending that they were compelled,

came to terms readily enough, being at heart only too glad to buy the slaves.

While passing the western end of Cuba, one of the hurricanes that sweep these sunny seas overtook the ships, and further gales chased them to the Mexican port of San Juan de Ulloa, since called Vera Cruz.

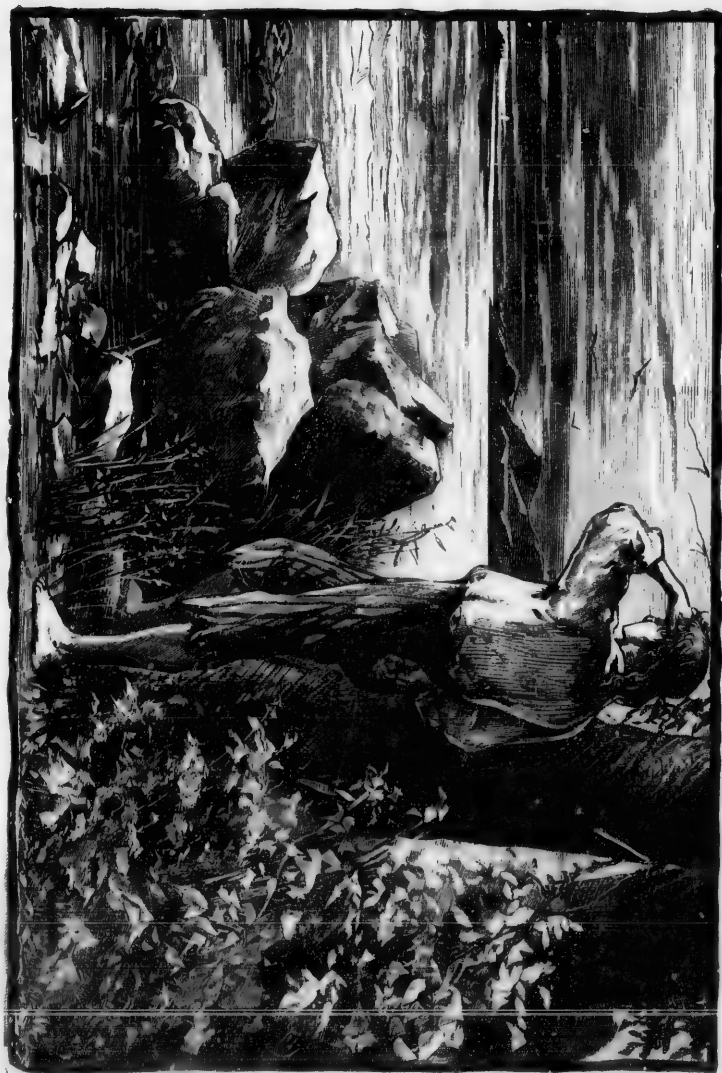
When the inhabitants found that, instead of the expected Spanish fleet, it was an English squadron, they were in great alarm; but Hawkins laid hands on nothing, and merely asked leave to trade and refit his vessels. He despatched messengers to the city of Mexico, which was a long distance off, and waited. The next morning, what should he espy but the Spanish fleet approaching the harbour!

He was now in an awkward dilemma. If he refused, as he could easily do, to allow it to enter, the million or more of treasure which it carried would probably go to the bottom. For there was no other anchorage anywhere near, and storms are sharp and sudden in those regions. If this happened, what would the English Queen say? There was still outward peace between the two nations, and the loss to King Philip's treasury would have to be made good. On the other hand, if Hawkins stood aside for these lumbering galleons, there was every chance of their commander playing him some dirty trick. For of Spanish treachery every English captain had something to say.

Hawkins chose the latter risk as the less serious of the two. He would be on the alert, and if caught, he "yet might sting." He asked for, and promptly received, a written promise from the Spanish Viceroy that his crews and vessels should in no wise be interfered with. This promise was "signed with the Viceroy's hand, and sealed with his seal, and forthwith a trumpet blown." It was a lie. The Spaniard saw a chance of destroying the foreign traders, and, at a pre-arranged hour and place, a large number of the Englishmen, who had gone ashore, were set upon, and cut down almost to a man. The handful that escaped got aboard the *Jesus*. Then, one after another, the great galleons came up, and from shore and sea the iron hail poured upon the little English squadron.

But the Devon men fought boldly, repulsing or dodging their opponents, whose aim was now to prevent their retreat. Says Hawkins, in his narrative: "The fight began so hot on all sides that, within one hour, the admiral of the Spaniards and one other of their principal ships were supposed to be sunk, and their vice-admiral burned." The enemy, being thus roughly handled, tried other means. They sent two fireships in among the English, and the device succeeded. The *Jesus* lay like a log on the water, her masts and spars having been shot away, and, as her escape seemed an impossibility, Hawkins transferred himself to the *Minion*, and those of his crew who

"SOME WANDERED NORTH, AND WERE BROUGHT HOME BY FRENCH SHIPS."







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were still alive followed him in one of their boats. The three smaller vessels of the squadron had been sunk by the Spanish guns, so that there was now only the *Minion* and the *Judith*, a little bark of 50 tons, "which bark," says Hawkins bitterly, "forsook us in our great misery."

Doubtless there was much to be said in defence of Drake's "desertion." His was a small craft, and fit rather to be shielded than to render help; besides which, the orders given by Hawkins were to get out to sea, which Drake did without stopping, as his commander did, to anchor when he had got clear of the land.

The homeward voyage of the *Minion* was a most disastrous one. She was ill-stocked with food and water; her crew was thinned by disease and sheer hunger; and in a great storm in the Mexican seas she well-nigh foundered. She was overcrowded too, and Hawkins, finding that many of the men would as soon be put ashore as proceed home, landed a number of them on the coast of Mexico, gave them money or articles of barter, and bade them "a sorrowful farewell."

The after-sufferings of those who continued the voyage were terrible enough, but their poor comrades fared worse. Some wandered north into what we now call Canada, and were brought home by French ships; most of them fell into the hands of the Spaniards,

and ultimately into the pitiless grip of the Inquisition. Horrible tortures were inflicted on them; some languished in foul dungeons, others were burned as heretics. One or two seem to have escaped; others became galley-slaves, and toiled at the weary sweeps for many a hopeless year. Three of them—David Ingram, Job Hortop, and Miles Philips—lived to write the story of their adventures, and their descriptions of Spanish cruelty kindled in English breasts a flame of indignation and hatred. No revenge seemed too fierce, no counter-blow too heavy, for such inhuman deeds; and if the sea-dogs of Devon became a scourge to the Spaniards on the high seas, it was largely due to the knowledge of such brutalities as these.

Hawkins, who arrived home with the *Minion* in January, 1569, was minded to go out again to find and rescue the men he had left in Mexico, but circumstances prevented this. He neglected no chance, however, of repaying the Spaniards in full for what they had done, and twenty years later, when the great Armada was sighted from his own good town of Plymouth, his heart must have leapt at the thought of the part he should play, and the lessons his guns would teach.

## ROUND THE WORLD WITH DRAKE

1577-1580



HE DRAGON," he was called by his Spanish enemies, playing upon the sound of his name. The jest was a bitter one, though; for to them he was, in deadly earnest, a dragon, breathing out fire and fury, swift in his movements, sudden in his appearances, defying killing or capture, a terror to all within his reach.

That was Francis Drake, the foremost of Queen Elizabeth's sea-captains. His Queen trusted and believed in him; the war-party in her councils regarded him as the readiest agent for the carrying out of their bold schemes; and every mariner knew him as the hero of enterprises that were sure to be audacious, and pretty certain to be successful.

As early as 1577, the year of his great voyage, Drake had won a reputation for daring and resource, as well as for skill in navigation. He had vowed undying enmity to the nation from whose treachery he

and his kinsman Hawkins had suffered, in the harbour-trap of Vera Cruz,<sup>1</sup> and he had since inflicted on the Spanish colonists a series of blows startling in their variety and sharpness. He had stormed the great seaport of Nombre de Dios with sixty men, and with eighteen and a contingent of natives he had marched forward by the mountain path and had fallen on the trading city of Venta Cruz. The Spaniards everywhere were growing aghast. He seemed to choose the apparently impossible for his favourite feats. There was no knowing where he might turn up next. The whole of the Spanish Main was kept in a flutter of excitement whenever he was known to be on the seas.

Such was the man who was now authorised to find a way into the Pacific—to get at the back of the world's treasure-house, of which Spain kept the key.

The route was to be that of Magellan in his famous voyage of 1519; but with the imperfect instruments and charts then alone available, to successfully repeat Magellan's exploit was by no means easy. Many had tried it and failed, and there was such a strong feeling, even among the Spaniards, against using the southerly passage, that they preferred painfully to transport the gold and spices of the East overland across the Isthmus of Panama, rather than let their treasure-ships encounter the storms of the dreaded Straits. To re-open, as it

<sup>1</sup> See the story of the third voyage of John Hawkins, told on page 146.



SIR FRANCIS DRAKE.

*Engraved by E. Whymper, from an old Painting.*



were, this sea-route was just the kind of undertaking Drake would relish, and it was one he was well fitted to carry out.

He was to go at his own risk; if he fell into the hands of the Spaniards no Queen's commission would save him from the death meted out to corsairs. But the money for equipping the expedition was readily forthcoming, and royalty took shares in the venture. On the 15th November, 1577, the five ships left Plymouth.

But this memorable voyage had a bad beginning. Before they were out of the Channel they were caught in a violent gale, and had to return for extensive repairs. A delay of nearly a month ensued, and then Drake was off once more. Fair winds favoured him, and on the morning when the Christmas bells were ringing across his native Dartmoor, he was running pleasantly down the African Coast.

His fleet consisted of four ships and a pinnace. And what were their sizes? In view of the project they were to attempt, we cannot but wonder and admire. The largest of them was the *Pelican*, 120 tons; the second was fresh from the shipwright's hands—a Deptford vessel of 80 tons, the *Elizabeth*; the *Swan*, a fly-boat of 50 tons; the *Marigold*, of 30 tons; and a 10-ton pinnace, the *Benedict*. And these were the craft in which English mariners ventured, even confidently, to face the great Atlantic rollers, the





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hurricanes of the West, and the fogs and ice-floes of the far North! They believed in themselves, they believed in their commanders, and they believed in the sailing powers of their ships, pigmy barks though they were.

In the present case they had special grounds for confidence. Drake was their leader—Francis Drake, the man of infinite resource, the most indomitable of fighters. It was clear that no ordinary voyage lay before them, and among the hundred and sixty men and boys aboard the five ships, expectation rose high.

Off Cape Blanco the admiral laid hands on a foreign bark in the harbour, and left in exchange his small pinnace. This prize was renamed the *Christopher*, and was added to the fleet. The Cape Verde Islands being reached, the delicious grapes and the sweet milk of the cocoa-nuts proved a dainty variation to ship's biscuit and hard meat, and the duties of the landing-parties must have been envied by their shipmates.

When these pleasant islands were left, fifty-four days were to pass without sight of land. For three weeks the ships lay on a windless ocean with the torrid sun beating down on them, till it seemed as if the very deep must stagnate underneath them. Round and red the sun rose up out of the eastern waters, and round and red he dipped below the green sea-line of the west. The deck planks burned the feet, the pitch bubbled in the seams, the painted woodwork blistered; and the

ship-boys might whistle their loudest without the least response of a breeze among the sails. Thunderstorms broke the monotony of the ocean silence—and such thunderstorms! The blackening skies seemed as if they were breaking up, and from far horizon to far horizon the long-drawn peals ran booming and crackling, louder than the broadside of fifty galleons; while the lightnings darted and danced among the gloomy clouds, and the rain fell in sheets.

The Brazil coast was sighted on 5th April, 1578. Soon the mouth of the Plate River was passed, fresh water being drawn up at the ship's side; and further south a raid was made on the seal rookeries for a supply of fresh meat.

A grave incident was about to mark the voyage. It seems that a certain Thomas Doughty, a personal friend of the admiral's, had accompanied the expedition as commander of one of the ships. It is more than probable that he was in the pay of Spain, and had his orders to embarrass and, if possible, wreck the whole undertaking. From the outset he had been working mischief in the fleet. Drake's suspicions were aroused, and when, about this time, Doughty and his ship were found to be missing, the truant bark was sought and brought back, her stores and fittings taken out of her, and the empty hulk set on fire. Doughty was taken on board Drake's own vessel, and when, on the 20th June, the fleet came to anchor in Port St. Julian, a

court-martial was held to inquire into the whole affair.

It was a serious matter. The success of the expedition depended on perfect discipline and co-operation being maintained; the natural perils were quite enough without the added danger of disunion and mutiny.

Doughty was charged with tampering with the men, and inciting them to disobedience. The evidence brought forward, taken in addition to his own confessions, was such that Drake *dared* not spare him. It was a piteous scene. Sentence of death was pronounced, and together the doomed man and his commander knelt to receive the sacrament. "Which being done," says an eye-witness, "and the place of execution made ready, he having embraced our general, and taken his leave of all the company, with prayers for the Queen's Majesty and our realm, in quiet sort laid his head to the block, where he ended his life. This being done, our general made divers speeches to the whole company, persuading us to unity, obedience, love, and regard of our voyage."

Strangely enough, it was a very place where Magellan, some sixty years before, had meted out punishment to a mutineer of his own, and the very gibbet rose before the eyes of the Englishmen, to emphasise the warning which their leader was pronouncing by solemn act that day.

A long stay was made at this Port St. Julian, it being winter in these parts, and not until mid-August did the fleet make ready to depart. It consisted now of three ships, for the *Swan* and the *Christopher* had been abandoned as unfit for further navigation. Running down the bleak Patagonian coast, they arrived three days later at the mouth of Magellan's Straits.

Drake needed no spur to induce him to enter; if one had been needed he would have found it in the thought that where a foreigner could go he and his men of Devon could go too.

Seventy miles of water-way, twisting and winding in the most perplexing and hopeless manner, lay before the new-comers. They had no charts, no knowledge of the soundings. They entered warily and began to feel their way along, threading the labyrinth but without a clue. On either hand great walls of snowy rock towered up forbiddingly, and higher still, through foggy clouds, the mariners could catch glimpses of lofty mountain-tops white with perpetual winter. Through these dismal Straits a cold wind was blowing, and the cries of the sea-fowl seemed in accord with the dreariness of their surroundings.

The ships emerged at last, and the wide Pacific opened out before them. But the worst troubles were yet in store. A terrific gale caught and swept them southward, under bare poles, for many a leaguc. An eclipse of the moon added to the general gloom, and

the buffeting of winds and billows was merciless. The *Marigold* went down with all hands, and when at length Captain Winter, who was in charge of the *Elizabeth*, regained the Straits, he forthwith determined to return home by the way he had come. One account says that his men protested, but he was sick at heart, and, deeming it probable that Drake's ship had foundered like her consort, he was in no mood to continue the daring voyage alone.

The admiral, however, had weathered the storm, and bearing up to the cluster of islands south of the Straits, he lay at anchor.<sup>1</sup> As the skies cleared and the seas grew smooth he set about finding Winter, and seeing nothing of him at the mouth of the Straits, he coasted north, along the Chili seaboard, hoping to find him perhaps at Valparaiso. He was destined, as we know, to see nothing more of the *Elizabeth* in those waters, but an Indian reported that a great

<sup>1</sup> Drake told Richard Hawkins that at this time, being unable to sail round the southernmost island, he himself went ashore, "and, seeking out the southernmost part of the island, caste himself downe upon the uttermost poynt, grovelling, and so reached out his bodie over it. Presently he imbarked, and then recounted unto his people that he had bene upon the southernmost knowne land in the world, and more further to the southwards upon it than any of them, yea, or any man as yet knowne." This boast is delightful. It is just like that of a schoolboy revelling in the thought that he has outdone his fellows and beaten the record. I quote it here because it is characteristic of Drake. It was in this spirit that most of his adventures were attempted. They read like schoolboy pranks; but they were done with the skill and calculation of a clever man.

Spanish ship was lying in Valparaiso Harbour, well freighted, and promised to guide them thither.

The crew of the galleon offered little or no resistance, so astounded were they to find English swords on that side of the American continent. In a very short time her golden store was transferred, a landing-party meanwhile ransacking the town; no blood was shed, and the *Pelican* (now for politic reasons re-named the *Golden Hind*, the crest of Sir Christopher Hatton) ran on towards Lima. Her wine casks were brimming with the contents of Spanish cellars; her fires were fed right royally with cedar wood; and 37,000 ducats' worth of "very pure and fine gold of Valdivia" lay piled below decks.

At Coquimbo a force of five hundred soldiers prevented the English from going ashore. At Tarapaca a Spaniard was caught napping. Beside him lay thirteen bars of silver. Says the old narrator, with delicious brevity, "We took the silver and left the man." A little farther up the coast they met a train of llamas driven by a man and a boy. Eight hundred-weight of silver was packed away in the panniers. The sailors chuckled over their good fortune. So large a sum necessitated a change of drivers, and the queer, deer-like creatures were guided down to the boats.

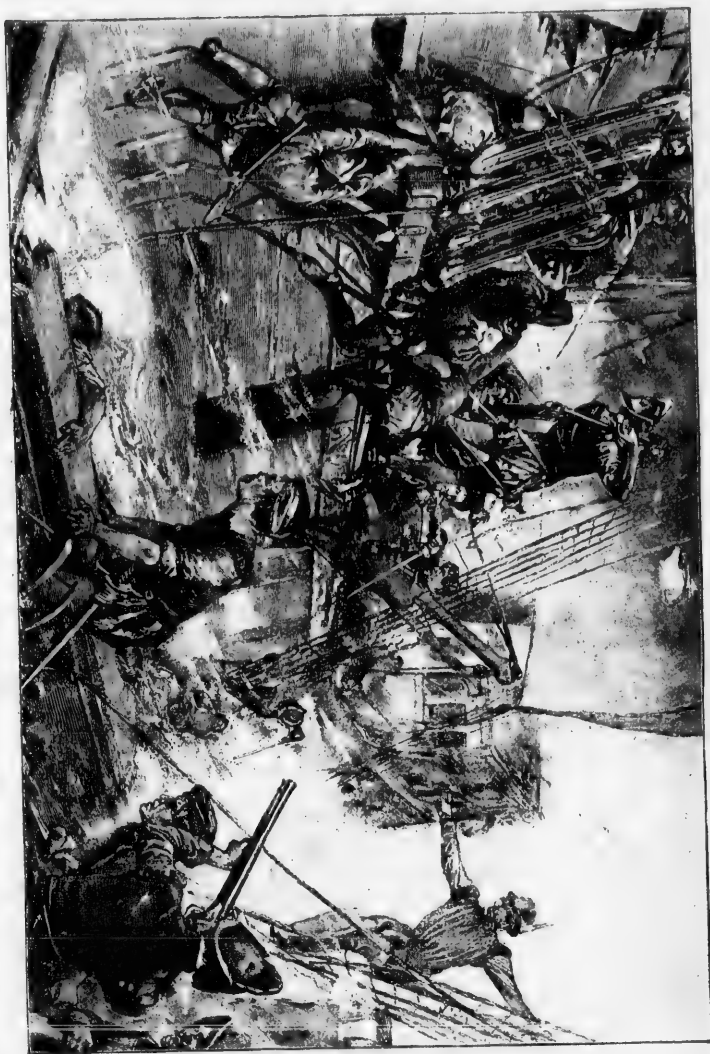
And so, picking up valuables at one point and victuals and requisites at another, Drake's ship stole on to Lima, and glided into the harbour—a veritable

apparition. Twelve ships lay sleeping there; the crews were mostly ashore; the merchants would have laughed at the suggestion of danger from English rovers—did not the breadth of a continent lie between them? For all that, Drake was in the harbour; and they bit their nails in helpless wrath as the chests of *reals* and rich China silks passed into alien hands.

But the biggest prize was yet to be won. A great galleon had started northward with an immense treasure in her hold. This was the *Cacafuego*, or, as we may say, the *Spitfire*. Drake vowed he would have her, and in hot haste he sailed away in pursuit. He stopped once to overhaul a smaller ship, which yielded him an acceptable supply of ship's tackling, besides eighty pounds' weight of gold and a crucifix studded with huge emeralds. Then on once more, while rumours of his coming flew along the shore, and the enraged viceroy armed and sent his tardy vessels in pursuit of the pursuer. For eight hundred miles the *Golden Hind* sped on. The excitement on board grew with every league. Drake had promised a golden chain to the first man who should sight the prize. It was an ocean race such as none on board had ever joined in yet.

The first day of March was drawing to a close, and they had just crossed the Line, when, in the afternoon light, young John Drake, nephew and page of the admiral, sighted from the ship's top a strange sail. It





ENGLISH ROVERS ATTACKING A SPANISH GALLEON.



was the *Cucafuego*, leisurely rolling along off Cape San Francisco, the high white cliffs of which shouldered up out of a forest of vari-coloured green.

Fearing to startle his prey, Drake followed warily and at a slower pace, and it was sunset, if not later, when, like a thunderbolt from a blue sky, he swooped upon her. The supposed peaceful trader labouring in her wake changed as if by magic into a swift war-ship armed to the teeth, and the most terrible of English captains summoned her to surrender. The clatter of falling spars that followed the roar of his guns was quickly succeeded by a rush of English feet upon her decks, and the great galleon with all her immense treasure was in Drake's hands!

To ensure the capture, the two ships were headed seaward out of reach of possible pursuers, and in the solitude of the wide Pacific the ransacking was begun.

The spoil was dazzling. Pearls and precious stones, eighty pounds' weight of gold, thirteen chests full of silver coins, and six-and-twenty tons of silver were brought up from her hold and packed away by the side of the glittering harvest reaped at earlier stages of the voyage. Verily the losses of that dark day of treachery in Vera Cruz Harbour were being repaid in full!

For several days the prize and her captor rocked together on the sea, the Spanish commander being treated with courtesy and consideration; but before

parting Drake frankly bade him tell the viceroy to put to death no more English prisoners, or he, Drake, would retaliate in a more summary way than his Excellency had ever experienced before. It was no idle threat.

The *Cacafuego* was now cast off, and her crew, thankful, no doubt, to get away from this terrible Englishman, took her home. Meanwhile, messengers hastened to Spain to apprise King Philip, and before many weeks had passed an armed watch was being kept for the Dragon, both among the West Indian Islands and at Magellan's Straits. The expectation was that he would creep back by the way he had come, or, transporting his booty across the Isthmus of Panama, build a ship on the Atlantic side, and sail home direct.

But the Dragon was too wary to choose either of these alternatives. He had an idea that the cold seas of the north might provide a safer and yet quite practicable route. So he sped away up the coast, not without further adventures, till he got as far as Canoa Bay, California, where, being beyond danger of molestation, he beached his good ship and set about extensive repairs. Her weedy keel was scraped, her storm-strained cordage replaced with new, and she was rendered as sound and tight as tar-barrel and shipwright's hammer could make her. Thousands of leagues lay between her and home, and all care would

have to be taken if the glittering load she carried was to reach the Queen in safety.

Afloat once more, the *Golden Hind* ran northwards till she was abreast of what is now Oregon; but the mariners suffered so from the cold that a return was made to the kindly San Francisco haven, where a short sojourn was made.

The old chronicler, himself one of the crew, gives a lengthy description of the Indians, who came down to see the Englishmen, believing them to be gods, and entreating them to remain and reign over the land. With strange dances and weird cries and uncouth gestures they signified their wishes, and pressed upon the admiral the chains and crowns and rude sceptres which were their insignia of authority. For all their antics and their painted faces they were a gentle folk, not yet exasperated to cruelty by white men's greed and oppression.

We of to-day, who know California as the home of thousands of English-speaking people, read with interest of how Drake christened the country "New Albion," because of the resemblance of its white cliffs to our own island coasts—the Albion that Julius Cæsar knew and coveted. And the statement that "there is no part of earth here to be taken up wherein there is not some probable show of gold or silver," sounds like a fulfilled prophecy, when we remember the rush to the Californian gold-fields half a century ago.

The final operations were then gone through. "At our departure hence our general set up a monument of our being there, as also of Her Majesty's right and title to the same, namely, a plate, nailed upon a fair great post, whereupon was engraved Her Majesty's name, the day and year of our arrival there, with the free giving up of the province and people into Her Majesty's hands, together with Her Highness' picture and arms, in a piece of six pence of current English money under the plate, whereunder was also written the name of our general."

Drake was anxious, as well he might be, to get home with his treasure. A recent capture off the coast had yielded a precious find in the shape of a chart of the Indian seas, through whose countless islands he meant to steer his way. But a tremendous blank of waters lay between him and the Moluccas, whose distant shores he aimed at reaching. Drake had confidence in himself and confidence in his vessel. He stood out fearlessly into the west, and on the 14th November he was among the islands.

What strikes us most about Drake's movements is the spirit of calm audacity in which they were made. Every step is well planned. Nearly all his attempts are successful; and when circumstances do compel him to desist, he and his men draw off, laughing boisterously, as it were. He is cowed by nothing, deterred by nothing. On board his vessel all is order and

precision; the fifty seasoned mariners obeyed him implicitly and trusted him utterly, and to the thirty or more youths and ship-boys he was king and hero in one. His cabin was fitted luxuriously, and at the door a sentry was always stationed. He dined with all ceremony, and to the accompaniment of music. As for the appointments of the ship itself, they were perfect, and her sailing powers were the astonishment of the many lumbering craft which she overtook in her adventurous course.

After a passage of *nearly seventy days* without sight of land, the green plumes of the island palms were grateful to the eye. At Ternate the monarch sought favour with the new-comers, begged to enter into a special trading treaty with England, and finally came off to the ship in person, attended by a fleet of large canoes bearing his counsellors and head-men. At another island twenty-six days were spent in careening and scraping the vessel. The curious creatures to be met with there filled the mariners with wonder—the fireflies dancing in the dark woods after sundown, the great flitting bats, “as big as large hens,” and the huge burrowing crabs.

It required the utmost vigilance to thread a passage with safety through the shoals and reefs abounding in these seas, and despite such care shipwreck was narrowly avoided. At eight o'clock one evening, early in the new year, the *Golden Hind* ran suddenly upon

a rock. All that night and the next day, until four o'clock in the afternoon, she lay immovable, at the mercy of the first gale that might spring up.

The anxiety on board must have been terrible. It seemed as if, after all, the gallant bark was fated to go to pieces under the beating of the wild white surf, and foundered with all the enormous spoil she carried. Hope sank in nearly every breast, but Drake never lost heart. He lightened the ship as much as possible; overboard went eight of his cannon, three tons of cloves, and a quantity of provisions; while prayers, many and earnest, went up to Heaven for deliverance. Almost as suddenly as she had struck, the vessel got free. A gentle breeze began to blow from the right quarter. The seamen sprang aloft with eager haste, the sails were spread, and apparently without rent or bruise the *Golden Hind* slid from the rock and passed safely on her way.

A friendly reception was given to the English on arriving at the island of Java, and then, glad to get free from the island-studded seas, with all their peculiar perils, Drake ran southward and westward across the Indian Ocean, and reached the Cape of Good Hope on the 18th of June. Rounding the stately headland he steered for Sierra Leone, and thence by the familiar Atlantic sea-path to the fair Plymouth haven he had left three years before.

Autumnal skies hung over England as the redoubt-



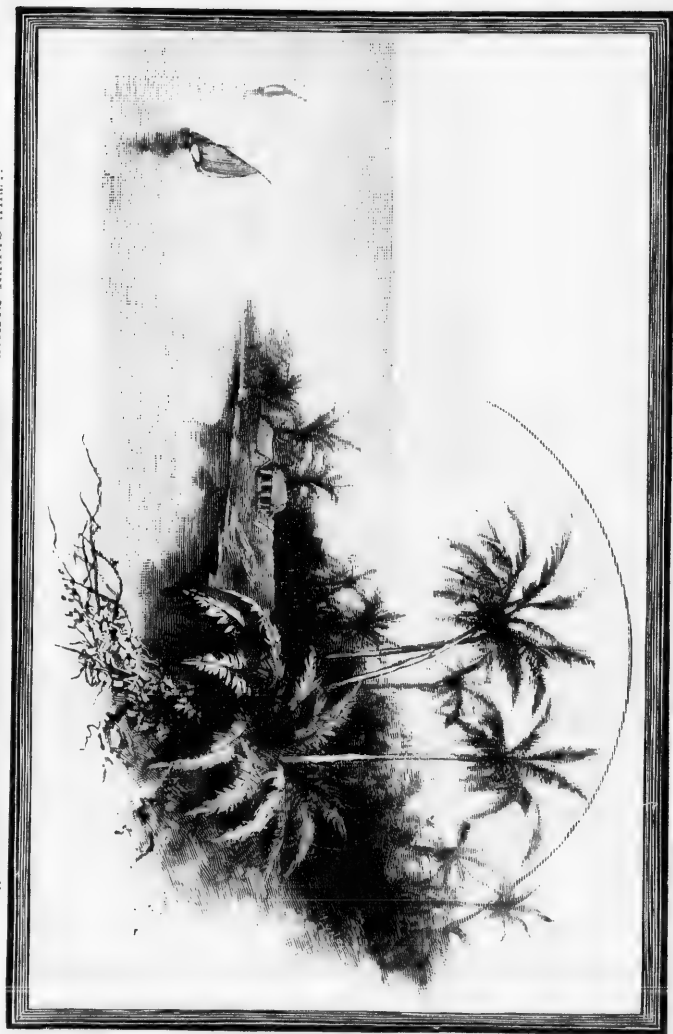
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"THE GREEN PLUMES OF THE ISLAND PALMS WERE GRATEFUL TO THE EYE."





able little vessel, so long given up for lost, sailed in past the green and russet heights of Mount Edgecumbe. But the feelings of captain and crew were enviable. As navigators they had accomplished a most daring feat, as adventurers they had picked the lock of the world's treasure-house, as patriots they had flouted the arch-enemy of their race and faith.

Angrily and indignantly the Spanish authorities demanded restitution of the golden spoil, alleging that the captures had been made in time of peace. The Queen replied by pointing to Ireland, where Spanish money and Spanish intrigue had stirred up rebellion which had cost her dear. She must first recoup herself for that.

In her heart she was delighted with Drake's exploit and bade him deduct £10,000 (the sum representing infinitely more in those days) as his own share before handing over the treasure to be valued and registered by her commissioner.

Drake's personal gifts to the Queen were of the costliest kind: his finest diamonds and largest emeralds soon sparkled on the hair and robes of his royal mistress, who listened with undisguised satisfaction to the story of the voyage. She requested that the *Golden Hind* should be brought round and laid up at Deptford as a memorial of the great achievement, and, at the final banquet held on board, she bestowed upon her favourite the honour of knighthood.

## IN GREENLAND WATERS

THE THREE VOYAGES OF JOHN DAVIS

1585-1587



TO be caught in the grip of the ice-king is a danger which the boldest Arctic navigator even of to-day cannot afford to smile at. Against the slow, pitiless pressure of the drifting floes, ribs of steel and the stoutest of planks have no chance. The strong ship which could face the wildest hurricane cracks like an egg-shell.

If this is so with the skilfully-built vessels of our own time, what risks awaited the little clumsy barks in which our forefathers tried to pierce the network of frozen shores which lay between them and the China seas! What risks—ay, and what pluck was needed to face those risks!

Every boy glows with admiration when he reads of how the Elizabethan traders fought the great Spanish power that tried to hinder and crush them; but perhaps he does not quite see how equally glorious, and more so, was the way in which they fought the

ice-king in his own dominions. Here was a foe who cared nothing for cannon-balls, and against whom reckless daring and clever ruses were of no avail. Moreover, to sail northward meant no sunny havens, no fruit-laden trees, no treasure-ships to plunder. It meant solitude and dreary coasts, bewildering mists and deadly cold.

At Sandridge, a pleasant house on a little hill, around which the snake-like River Dart well-nigh coils itself, was born, about the year 1550, a boy whose name was to be "writ large" on the map of the Arctic world.

He had for neighbours, perhaps for companions (though they were all older than he), the Gilberts of Greenway, three lads of whom Sir Humphrey was to become the most famous. From his beautiful riverside home, this boy, John Davis, passed out to follow a sea calling. In due time, thanks to his influential friends, the Gilberts and Sir Walter Raleigh, he became a prominent man and was recognised as a skilful and experienced navigator.

And so it came to pass that when a company of merchants, with Adrian Gilbert for president, obtained the royal permission to search for the North-West Passage, John Davis was given command of the expedition. It consisted only of two small ships—the *Sunshine*, a London bark of 50 tons burden, and the *Moonshine* of Dartmouth, 35 tons. The money

was supplied partly by West of England men and partly by Londoners. Among the latter, a certain William Sanderson was foremost. His name occurs repeatedly in the story of Davis, to whom he proved a staunch friend and a generous patron. He believed in Davis, and respected his sterling qualities; and Davis, on his part, seems to have given loyal and whole-hearted service in return.

The two ships sailed out of Dartmouth, on June 7, 1585, and made their way by degrees down the Cornish coast, the wind being contrary. Twice they were forced to put in at the Scilly Isles, and on the second occasion the young commander showed his skill and his wise use of opportunity by making a nautical survey of the islands, noting the position of "rockes and harboroughs to the exact use of Navigation."

By the end of the month, they were speeding northward, and out of sight of land. Davis was on board the *Sunshine*, with a total of twenty-three men, among whom was John Jane (or Janes), a nephew of Mr. Sanderson, and the historian of this and the third voyage undertaken by Davis into the North-West. Four musicians were also aboard, a welcome addition to the crew of any bark bound for those dreary regions. A certain William Bruton was captain of the *Moonshine*, with a crew of nineteen all told.

Shoals of porpoises enlivened the way in the early days of July, and some of them being caught were

cooked and highly approved of. Further on, a surprising number of whales were seen, and the new hands were full of excited interest in the unwonted spectacle.

Shortly after passing through a turmoil of violent currents, the ships reached smooth water, and as they did so a thick fog came down, hiding even the two close-following vessels from one another. Then out of the mist came strange and terrifying noises. Some said it must be one thing and some another, but the more experienced declared it must be the sea-tide roaring in the cliff-caves of some neighbouring shore. So Davis and two of his chief men got into a boat and rowed in the direction of the noise, sounding with lead and line as they went. But it was all deep water. Presently, they came upon clusters of floating ice, and scrambling on to them they discovered that the mysterious sounds were made by the rolling and grinding together of the bergs.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,  
The ice was all around,  
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,  
Like noises in a swound."

By the 20th July, the cry was, "Land ho!" Says John Janes: "As we sayled along the coast the fogge brake up, and we discovered the land, which was the most deformed, rocky, and mountainous land that ever we sawe. The first sight whereof did show us as if it had bene in forme of a sugar loafe, standing to our

sight above the cloudes, for that it did shewe over the fogge like a white liste in the skye, the tops altogether covered with snowe, and the shoare beset with yee a league off into the sea, making such yrksome noyse as that it seemed to be the true patterne of desolation, and after the same our captaine named it the 'Land of Desolation.'"

They were now off the east coast of Greenland. Much ice baffled their attempts to trace the shore-line, but the men asserted that they saw woods crowning the rocks in the distance, and one tree sixty feet long, probably a giant pine, was seen floating past.

The weather was very cold for the time of year; and to put the mariners in good humour their rations were increased. It was ordered "that every messe being five persons, should have halfe a pound of bread and a kan of beere every morning to breakfast."

So the expedition rounded the southern point of Greenland and sailed up the western coast as far as an inlet which they named Gilbert's Sound, in latitude 64°.

On one of the islands in this sound the English fell in with the Eskimo. They, "having espied us, made a lamentable noyse, as we thought, with great outeryes and skreechings; we hearing them thought it had been the howling of wolves." It was, however, only the native mode of hailing their unexpected visitors, and when overtures were made to them the



simple-minded folk were soon drawn into parley. The musicians were fetched ashore, and the sailors danced and laughed and held out hands of friendship; until with strange gestures these slant-eyed savages began to respond, and signified their wish to traffic.

One morning as many as thirty-seven *kayaks* (canoes) surrounded the ships, and in exchange for mere trifles the seamen bought coats and leggings of seal or bird-skins rudely stitched together. These furry or feathered trophies probably found their way into many a Devonshire cottage, to be stroked and wondered at and admired.

All along this coast the rocks were dotted with seals, after whom as yet had come no murderous crews, with bludgeon and knife to supply the demands of Fashion.

By the 1st of August the two ships were crossing the broad stretch of sea which now goes by the name of Davis Strait. On the 6th the opposite coast (now Baffin Land) rose in sight, and a certain sea-facing hill, which flashed and glistened in the sunshine, was dubbed Mount Raleigh. Other places in the neighbourhood received names, recalling pleasantly home friends and old West Country haunts.

It was at the foot of Mount Raleigh that the sailors had an adventure. Several animals were sighted from the ships prowling near the hill-foot. A landing-party, armed with guns and spears, rowed to the shore, and found to their no small excitement that the animals

were four huge polar bears. John James tells us that one of them came ambling down the hill right before him. He fired and hit the beast in the neck. It plunged into the sea, but the men rowed after it, and killed it with their boar spears. Two more bears were despatched that evening.

The next day another bear was caught napping on the top of an island. He was a monster, with feet fourteen inches in breadth. He took several bullets without succumbing, grappling savagely with the spears, and finally swam across to a cove, where he was followed and slain.

The expedition then proceeded up the wide inlet now called Cumberland Gulf, and, after tracing the shores for some distance, it was decided to return home. Fourteen days' sailing brought the two ships safely into Dartmouth, on the closing day of September.

In the following May, Davis was again afloat. This time his fleet consisted of a ship of 120 tons, called the *Mermaid*; another of 60 tons, named the *Sunshine*; the old *Moonshine*, and a 10-ton pinnace, the *North Star*. The Greenland Coast was sighted about the 15th of June.

Ere this, Davis had divided his little squadron, sending the *Sunshine* and the *North Star* to make their way up the east coast of Greenland and ascertain whether there was open water between that continent and Iceland. He himself, with the *Mermaid* and the *Moonshine*, held on towards the north-west.



"A HUGE BEAR WAS CAUGHT NAPPING ON THE TOP OF AN ISLAND."



While the ships' boats were exploring one of the sounds, a number of *kayaks* were seen approaching. At first prompted merely by curiosity, the natives at length espied in the boats certain sailors who had visited the country during the previous summer. At once they uttered glad cries of recognition; and, paddling closer, they "tooke hold of the oars and hung about the boate with such comfortable joy as would require a long discourse to be uttered." Davis himself came in for a warm reception, and his presents of cutlery made the simple natives ready and eager to trade. They brought skins of seal, deer, Arctic hare, and sea-birds, as well as dried fish and other commodities.

Ten miles inland, behind the snowy mountains of the coast, the adventurers found grassy moorlands and a broad river flowing to the sea. Falcons soared in the clear air, and black, sedate ravens sat on the crags thinking of their next carrion meal. Here and there were traces of human occupation—broken implements, a skull or two, fire-ashes, a rudely-fashioned grave, and such like.

The friendliness of the natives was shown in many ways, but their thievish habits were incorrigible. The very sight of anything made of iron was a temptation which none of them could resist. The odd part was that they seemed unable to understand how their thefts endangered friendship. When the sailors grew angry

and threatened them, they either slung stones at the boats or paddled away out of reach; and the next day, back they would come, requesting to be allowed to trade as before.

Some of their tricks proved a serious annoyance. They cut the ships' cables, they detached the ships' boats lying astern, they spoiled a number of things hung out to air, and they stole an assortment of oars and weapons. At first Davis tried what firearms would do to stop this thieving; but their simplicity and impudence combined were so laughable that Davis bade his men desist, and merely take extra precautions against robbery in future. One of the natives, however, was seized and carried on board. He settled down after a while, and proved an interesting shipmate, clever with his fingers and intelligent enough; but it is clear that he did not long survive his capture.

In mid-July enormous masses of ice were encountered, some like floating islands of large extent, with cliffs and bays and hills complete. The mariners stared, wonderstruck, and their captain himself writes: "I think that the like before was never seen." This ice was a great hindrance to navigation. Places accessible the previous summer were now quite blocked. The air was chilled by it to such an extent that the rigging was white and slippery, and the sailcloth grew stiff as boards. Sickness became alarmingly general among the crews, and many murmurings were heard.

Davis hit upon a plan which would meet the difficulty. He resolved to clean and refit the *Moonshine*, and proceed in her, while allowing the *Mermaid* to return home with those men who were invalided or faint-hearted.

The repairs and re-victualling of the *Moonshine* took some days; and the heat of the summer sun, and the mosquito pest, made the task rather a trying one. But on the 12th August she was ready, and parting company with her consort, she sailed away in further search of the great North-West Passage.

The coast trended south, and Davis followed it till he was abreast of Hudson Strait, and by and bye of Newfoundland. At many points the myriads of sea-birds, congregated on cliff-ledge and outlying rock, amazed the voyagers. The sea swarmed with fish too, so that half an hour at the lines resulted in a catch of a hundred cod. A more important fact was that at one gap on the coast a strong current was noticed which ran in a westerly direction as if there was open sea beyond. But all attempts to follow up what was judged to be a promising discovery were frustrated by rough weather and contrary winds.

On the 6th September a landing-party of five young seamen was surprised and attacked by the suspicious natives. Two of the five fell pierced with arrows, and two more were badly hurt. The fifth plunged into the sea and swam towards the ship. One of his arms was

shot through with an arrow, but he pluckily held on his way, and was dragged on board by his messmates.

That night a great gale got up, and the *Moonshine* was nearly wrecked, her cable having parted. The terror of the situation was increased by the fear of being driven ashore among the hostile natives, who were believed, perhaps rightly, to be cannibals.

In the beginning of October Davis arrived home. He found that the *Sunshine* had preceded him. The *Mermaid* must have reached England much earlier. The little *North Star*, however, had got separated from her consort, the *Sunshine*, during a September storm, and was never heard of again.

Yet once more John Davis persuaded his patrons to send him northward; and next May, with three ships, he sailed out of the familiar harbour of Dartmouth. The two larger vessels were the *Elizabeth* and the *Sunshine*, besides which there was a stout little pinnace, the *Ellen*.

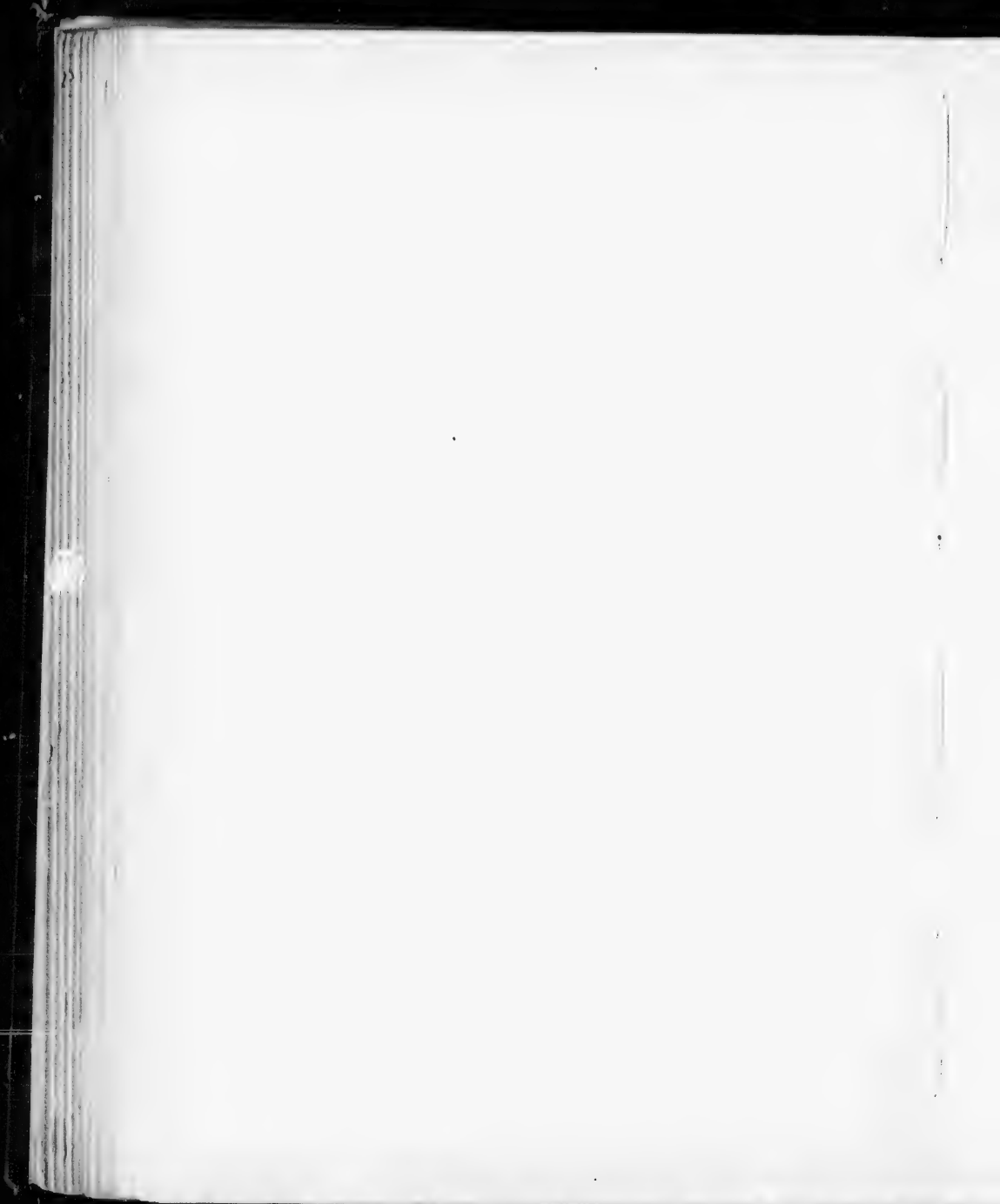
The two previous voyages having brought no profits to those who had fitted out the expedition, it was arranged that two of the ships should be employed in fishing, while the third went on a tour of discovery.

It was not a very eventful voyage, and it left the problem of a North-West Passage pretty much where it was before. But the courage and hardihood shown by both commander and men in searching those remote shores and steering their perilous way through the



"THE MYRIADS OF SEA-BIRDS AMAZED THE VOYAGERS."





drifting ice was beyond all praise. A more northerly point, too, was reached, namely, Sanderson's Hope, near Upernavik. The lofty headland was so called by Davis, after the kindly and generous London merchant to whose patronage he owed so much, and the name has never been altered. The date of its discovery by Davis was 30th June, 1587.

Returning southward to the appointed meeting-place, he found the two ships which were left for fishing purposes—gone. They had weighed anchor and sailed home, deserting their commander, to whom a solemn promise had been given that they would wait for him. Happily, Davis was not in need of succour, though his supplies were running short; and, setting his course for England, he arrived safely in mid-September at the old west-country port.

Other voyages he was to make, and other seas he was to sail; but it is with the solitudes of "the white North," into which, with his tiny vessels, he thrice ventured, that the name of John Davis will ever be associated.

## EASTWARD TO THE INDIES

THE VOYAGES OF SIR JAMES LANCASTER

1591-1600



NUMBERS of people who are familiar with the names of Drake, Frobisher, and Hawkins, will confess that they have never heard of Sir James Lancaster, though he belongs to the great Elizabethan group of sea captains, of whom so much has been written. If anyone will turn, however, to the map of North America, and run their finger along the west coast of Greenland, and across to the northern end of Baffin Land, they will find the name Lancaster Sound has been given to a broad strip of water there. The name was bestowed by one great captain—William Baffin himself—in honour of a brother-voyager.

But in no other way was Sir James Lancaster associated with the dreary North. The sunny Indian seas claim him as the pioneer of those countless fleets that have since sailed forth from England. The East

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India Company was founded by London merchants in 1599, thanks largely to information brought home by Lancaster on his first voyage. And when, early in the following year, the Company's ships paid their first visit to the Indies, he went with them as commander.

Two accounts of Lancaster's first voyage have come down to us.

He sailed from Plymouth on the 10th of April, 1591, with three ships; the *Penelope*, the *Merchant Royal*, and the *Edward Bonaventure*. Touching at the Canaries, they proceeded down the west coast of Africa, capturing on the way a Portuguese merchantman, which yielded a most acceptable prize of wine, oil, olives, etc. "These stores," says the historian of the voyage, "were better to us than gold." For sickness was rife among the crews. The drenching tropical storms, the salted victuals, and the fever-laden land breeze, all had a share in the mischief, which, indeed, grew so serious that the *Merchant Royal* was taken and filled with invalid sailors and sent back to England.

In a wide curve the remaining ships ran down towards the Cape of Good Hope, and doubled that mighty headland on the 8th of September. A stay was made at a pleasant bay on the east coast, where the negroes were induced to come and trade. Gifts of knives and trinkets led to a supply of cattle being received in exchange. Penguins and seals were got by

hunting, and Lancaster himself killed a fine specimen of antelope—"of the bigness of a young colt." "Here are also," we are told, "great store of overgrown monkeys" (!).

Gliding up the east coast of the great continent, they were overtaken by a terrible tempest. The wind blew in fierce gusts, and the great waves rose threateningly under the lowering night sky. Suddenly the men in the *Edward Bonaventure* saw a great wall of water strike their consort as she went staggering over the dark surges; the glimmer of her poop lantern was quenched, and, strain their eyes as they might, their fellow-voyagers could see nothing more of her. That night they were alone upon the storm-lashed waters.

Four days later, at ten o'clock in the morning, another disaster occurred. A terrific peal of thunder shook the heavens, and the lightning which accompanied it struck the *Edward*, and wrought sad havoc. It split the mainmast, fusing the great nails driven into it, and, what was worse, it "slew foure of our men outright, and of 94 men there was not one untouched, whereof some were stricken blind, others were bruised in their legs and arms, and others in their brests, so that they voided blood two days after; others were drawn out at length, as though they had been racked. But (God be thanked) they all recovered, saving onely the foure which were slain outright."

Continuing northward, the little vessel narrowly

escaped shipwreck on the shore of Madagascar, or St. Lawrence as it was then called. The moonlight falling on the long white line of tumbling waves caught the eye of one of the crew, who happened to be on deck. The ship's head swung round at the warning cry, and in safety she passed on.

At the Island of Comoro, north-east of Mozambique, the *Edward's* men waited several days, according to previous agreement with their ill-fated comrades in the *Penelope*; but the latter did not appear. At last, having no hope, and having lost between twenty and thirty of their number by treachery when landing for water at this Moorish settlement, they weighed anchor and sailed away to Zanzibar. Here they heard from some friendly "Moors" (Arabs as we should say) that the slanders and false accusations of the Portuguese traders were largely the cause of the violence done at Comoro.

It is interesting, now that Zanzibar is so familiar a name to British ears, to find one of our countrymen writing, three centuries ago, in praise of the anchorage: "This place for the goodnesse of the harborough and watering, and plentifull refreshing with fish, whereof we tooke great store with our nets, and for sundry sorts of fruits of the countrey . . . is carefully to be sought for by such of our ships as shall hereafter passe that way."

Resuming their course, the adventurers thought to

run for the Red Sea or the Island of Socotra, but, while they were deliberating, a north-west wind happily sprang up, and wafted them across the Indian Ocean towards Cape Comorin, the southern point of the great peninsula. Rounding the Island of Ceylon, they found themselves, at last, off the Island of Sumatra.

The weather was bad; squalls were frequent and dangerous, the rains pitiless, and in the humid heat the Englishmen fast began to sicken, and many died. The winter season was at hand, and at Penang it was resolved to make a long sojourn. The place furnished little that was useful to the worn mariners, but the tall forest trees are mentioned—a hundred feet in height, and suitable for ships' masts. Doubtless part of this great timber supply was used in refitting the *Edward*.

When the time came to depart, no less than twenty-six seamen had been laid to rest under the giant trees. Only thirty-three men and a boy remained to work the ship, and a third of these were miserably weak and unfit. On the 1st of September (1592), the *Edward* put to sea, and the capture of certain well-laden vessels gladdened the hearts of the sorely reduced crew. One was an 80-ton ship of Martaban, freighted with pepper, which was at once confiscated. Another was a large Portuguese trader carrying rice to Malacca. Early in October a 700-ton ship of Goa was rendered to the guns of



the *Edward*; her cargo contained three hundred butts of Canary wine, silks and hosiery, glass, paper, etc.

Early in December the adventurers were cruising off the southern point of Ceylon, in wait for further rich prey. Here they expected to fall in with the Bengal fleet of seven or eight sail and certain vessels of Pegu, and others from a Portuguese settlement still further south. "Which ships were to come that way within fourteene dayes to bring commodities to serve the *caraks* which commonly depart from Cochin for Portugall by the middest of Januarie."

But while the English waited they lost their only available anchor, and further cruising along the coast would have been full of risk. A desire to return home seized the men, and as Lancaster was lying at that time sick and helpless in his cabin, they took matters into their own hands, and set the course for home. Their captain relinquished with great chagrin the glowing prospect of further rich captures and trading treaties, but there was no help for it. Westward they went, across the great ocean, passing Madagascar on their right, and fell in with the African Coast at what is now Delagoa Bay.

On the last day of March they rounded the great Cape, and early in April they dropped anchor at the little rocky island of St. Helena. Here a strange and pathetic incident occurred. There was living on the island an English sailor, named John Legar, who, being

sick and like to die, had been landed by the *Merchant Royal* on her way back to England. He had recovered, and happened to be in "the chapel," singing, when a landing-party from the *Edward* passed by. Taking the voice to be that of a Portuguese, the seamen unceremoniously pushed open the door and went clattering in. The poor fellow was at first so startled, "not having seen any man in fourteene moneths before," and the next moment so overjoyed at recognising the faces of old shipmates, that between the two extremes of terror and delight he became insane. Kindly and remorsefully the mariners took him aboard; but the excited brain could not rest, and in a few days he died.

The ship was victualled and watered at this island. We are told that there was "great store of very wholesome and excellant good greene figs, oranges, and lemons very faire, abundance of goates and hogs, and great plentie of partridges, guinecocks, and other wilde foules." On the 12th of April the voyage was resumed.

But Lancaster's crew seems to have been infected with a discontented and mutinous spirit. The consequence was, as so often happens, a run of ill-luck and disaster. The men insisted on going home direct, and refused to work the ship unless their wishes were complied with. But they had not long crossed the Line when contrary winds obliged them to steer for the West Indies to replenish their food supply. They

called at Trinidad, but the presence of the Spaniards hindered them, and the relief they needed was not obtained until they fell in with a Normandy bark, from whose captain they begged or bought bread and wine enough for present need. Later on, when a hurricane carried away nearly all their sails, the Frenchman provided them with fresh canvas. These pleasant relations were upset by the disorderly conduct of the English crew, and it was some time before the misunderstanding was made right.

Fresh misfortunes and privations awaited the adventurers. Their ship grew water-logged with the buffetings of frequent storms, and her foremast was carried away. For a week salted hides were the chief, if not the sole, article of food left. Crabs and tortoises were eagerly sought and eaten. At one island several of the crew went ashore and refused to rejoin the ship in spite of all persuasions.

The final mishap came when, during the absence of Lancaster and nineteen of the crew on the small island of Mona, the ship itself drifted away with five men and one boy aboard; it was alleged that the carpenter had secretly cut the cable. The castaways divided themselves into two parties, and each had much ado to get food enough for subsistence; for nearly a month their chief diet consisted of "stalkes of purse-laine boyled in water." At last, the captain and the six men who were with him, were seen and taken off by a French

vessel, and entertained most hospitably. Another French bark, which was starting for home, carried the Englishmen back to Europe, and, at last, on the 24th of May, 1594, at the Port of Rye, Lancaster again set foot on his native soil. He had been absent three years, six weeks, and two days.

Of the other castaways, consisting of a party of seven, tidings soon came to hand: two, while clambering after sea-fowl, had fallen from the cliffs and been killed; three had been massacred as interlopers by Spaniards from San Domingo; and two were taken off by a ship of Newhaven, and eventually reached England in safety.

The next voyage undertaken by Lancaster was a piece of piracy pure and simple. It consisted of an expedition in which three ships made a descent on Pernambuco, a Portuguese settlement on the coast of Brazil. It was carried out with a spirit and daring worthy of Drake himself, and was completely successful. The cargo of a wealthy East Indian *carack*, which had been unloaded here, fell into the hands of the audacious Englishmen, together with much cotton, sugar, Brazil wood, etc. This expedition started in September, 1594, and returned home in the following July.

A far more important undertaking was that which belongs to the year 1600.

A report drawn up by a certain Dr. Thorne, em-

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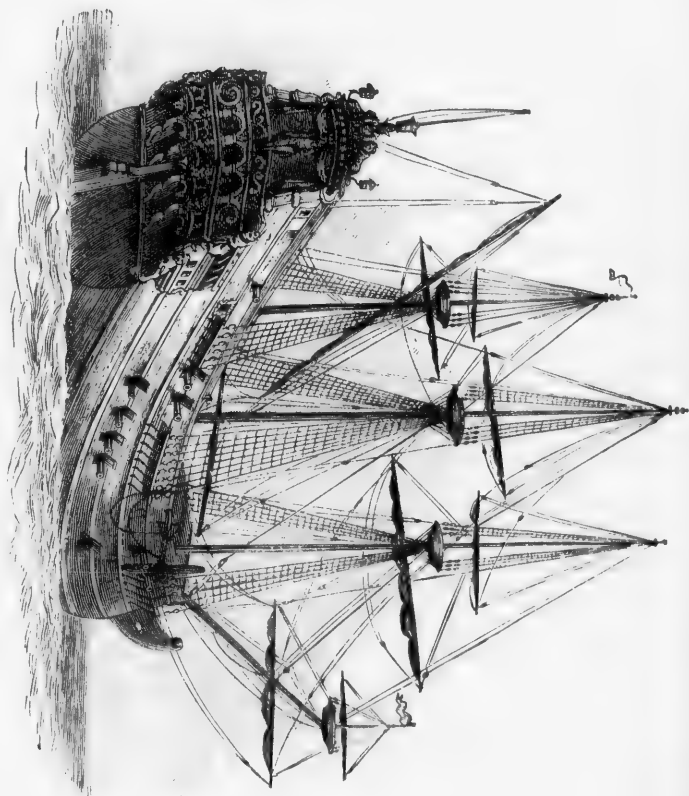
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bodying the facts and figures furnished by Lancaster after his first voyage, had led the merchants of London to decide on founding a company for establishing a regular trade with the East Indies. The idea was warmly taken up. A sum of £30,000 was rapidly subscribed, and this was eventually increased to £72,000. The Queen's favour was easily won for the scheme, and on the last day of 1599 a royal charter was granted, giving the adventurers trading privileges for fifteen years. Her Majesty also furnished them with letters of introduction to certain of the Indian potentates.

Captain John Middleton was vice-admiral, John Davis, of Arctic fame, was pilot of the fleet, and the whole command was entrusted to Captain James Lancaster. The Lord-Treasurer had proposed Sir Edward Michelborne, a gentleman of the Court, for the command, but the shrewd London business men at the head of the concern preferred a practical seaman, and stuck to their first choice.

Davis had been out to India before with the Dutch, and on his return he had been very wisely secured by the Company to lead their ships.

The expedition left Woolwich and dropped down the Thames on the 13th of February, 1600. It consisted of four large ships—large, that is, according to the notions of the day. There was the *Red Dragon*, of 600 tons, with two hundred and two men; the

*Hector*, of 300 tons, with one hundred and eight men; the *Ascension*, of 260 tons, with eighty-two men; the *Susan*, of 240 tons, with eighty-eight men; and a victualling ship, the *Guest*, of 130 tons. Supplies for twenty months were carried. Besides the crews, merchants went with the vessels to conduct the trading operations, and everyone was eager and expectant.

Very slow progress was made, owing to the lack of favouring winds, until the Channel was left, and then a good passage was made to the Canaries; but off the Guinea Coast bad weather and fearful lightnings, alternated with vexatious calms. A Portugal ship, however, was intercepted near the Equator, and relieved of her cargo of wine, oil, and meal, which, says the historian of the voyage coolly, "was a great help to us in the whole voyage after."

This curious mixture of honest trading and bare piracy seems strange to us nowadays. But we must remember that in those old times there was no such thing as international law. The armed merchantmen that left the shores of Europe did pretty much what they pleased, and they paid for the privilege by taking upon themselves all risks. A great trading competition was going on between the old, strong, seafaring peoples of Spain and Portugal, and the new-comers from Holland, England, and France; but to read the stories which Hakluyt has collected and preserved for us, one might suppose that, when once away upon



the high seas, each looked upon the other as his natural enemy. "Capture when you can, surrender when you must"—that seems to have been the rule. So the swift rover had no hesitation in laying aboard the slow, helpless freight ship, being quite aware that, if in turn pursued and captured by some powerful foe, death or slavery would be the probable penalty.

Here, for example, we find that the Portugal ship, taken by Lancaster's fleet, had got separated from her armed consorts. These were three men-of-war that had been sent out to India by the Portuguese Government, "*to keep the coast of the East India from being traded with by other nations.*" There lay the point of the quarrel. One nation wanted to keep the trade of certain foreign countries in its own hands, and the other nations resented this, and were quite prepared to use force. Hence we must regard what so often looks like piratical doings as the natural give-and-take of a great mercantile competition.

After crossing the Line the victualler was emptied and dismantled, and the bare hulk was cast adrift. The Cape of Good Hope was reached at last, and the fleet put into Table Bay. The greater part of the seamen were down with scurvy. In some of the ships the poor fellows were so sick and weak that they could scarcely haul at the ropes, and the merchants aboard—landsmen though they were—had to mount the rigging and lend a hand at taking in the top-sails.

It is distressing to find how the old voyagers suffered from this disease. They had no means of preserving meat except by steeping it in brine, and the lack of vegetable food and proper variety of diet soon told upon their health. The long passages accomplished so marvellously quickly by our modern liners, built of steel and moved by steam, meant to our forefathers weeks and months of slow sailing. Storms and calms alike prevented any certainty as to time. And so the water-casks would give out, and sickness and thirst would work together to enfeeble the crews. Is it strange that they grew weary of the world of waters, the hard fare, the long unrest, the heaving deck; and, when thwarted in their desire for home, would at times break out in fierce mutiny? Rather should we wonder at the endurance which, for the most part, they showed, and the heroism with which the long voyages were carried through.

Lancaster had doctored his own men with the simple remedy of lemon juice, and they were so much stronger than the rest that they went aboard the scurvy-stricken ships and hoisted out the boats for landing—a feat of which the poor enfeebled fellows were utterly incapable!

From the natives on shore fresh meat was readily obtained in exchange for knives and pieces of old iron. While the bargaining was going on, a party of sailors stood drawn up with loaded muskets, under orders to fire at the first sign of treachery. This was no need-

less precaution, for a Dutch ship had recently lost five or six men here by violence.

"The people of this place," we are told, "are all of a tawnie colour, of a reasonable stature, swift of foot, and much given to picke and steale; their speech is wholly uttered through the throate, and *they clocke with their tongues* in such sort that in seven weekes which we remained heere in this place, the sharpest wit among us could not learn one word of their language."

Towards the end of October, the fleet moved on. The striking position and shape of Table Mountain was noticed: "Such another plaine marke to find an harbour in is not in all that coast, for it is easie to be seene seventeen or eighteen leagues into the sea."

Instead of coasting up the eastern shores of the African continent, and striking across the Indian Ocean in a straight line, as Vasco da Gama, for example, had done, John Davis seems to have steered the fleet eastward almost as soon as the Cape of Good Hope had been doubled; and skirting the southern and eastern shores of Madagascar, ran north-east for the Maldivé Islands.

A melancholy incident, however, occurred before they left the pleasant Madagascar haven of Antongil Bay.

They had put in here to get fruit—oranges, lemons, plantains, etc., and one of the sick men on board

having died, the body was taken ashore. According to custom, a salute was fired by the ship's guns. By some mischance, the shot had not been extracted, and, as luck would have it, struck one of the boats of the funeral party, killing both the captain and the boatswain's mate. "So that," as the old writer ruefully observes, "they that went to see the buriall of another were both buried their themselves."

On the 5th of June, after a long run across the broad Indian Ocean, the English fleet dropped anchor off Acheen, an important town at the northern end of the great Island of Sumatra.

Many foreign craft were lying there as they entered; traders from Calicut and Bengal, Malabar and Pegu. Two Dutch merchants, resident at the fort, came aboard, and in the most friendly way offered their services. They encouraged the Englishmen by telling them that the native King was hospitable to strangers, and that the fame of Queen Elizabeth had already reached there; the news of the crushing defeat of the Spanish Armada seems also to have impressed the King considerably.

So, when Lancaster chose Captain John Middleton and a suite of four or five gentlemen, and sent them to request an interview, the swarthy monarch (who, by the bye, had risen, tradition says, from the humble grade of a fisherman), received the deputation most graciously. "And withall he sent his commendations



"SUCH ANOTHER PLAINE MARK IS NOT IN ALL THAT COAST."  
TABLE MOUNTAIN FROM THE SEA.



to the generall, willing him to stay one day aboard his ships to rest himselfe after his comming from the disquiet seas, and the next day to come a land, and have kind audience and frank leave with as great assurance as if he were in the kingdome of the Queene, his mistris."

Nothing could be more reassuring than this. On the third day, therefore, Lancaster went ashore with some thirty picked men, and lodged with the friendly Hollanders, pending the arrival of a formal invitation from the King.

Presently it came, with true Oriental pomp and display. The street filled with eager spectators, a dense throng of brown faces; and in the midst the English saw approaching, with slow swinging trunks and solemn gait, six tall elephants. The biggest, which was about thirteen or fourteen feet high, had a gorgeous howdah strapped on its back. Inside the howdah was a great basin of gold, with a silken kerchief; this was to be the receptacle of the Queen's letter of introduction. Lancaster was invited to mount it another of the elephants, some of his suite also riding, others preferring to walk.

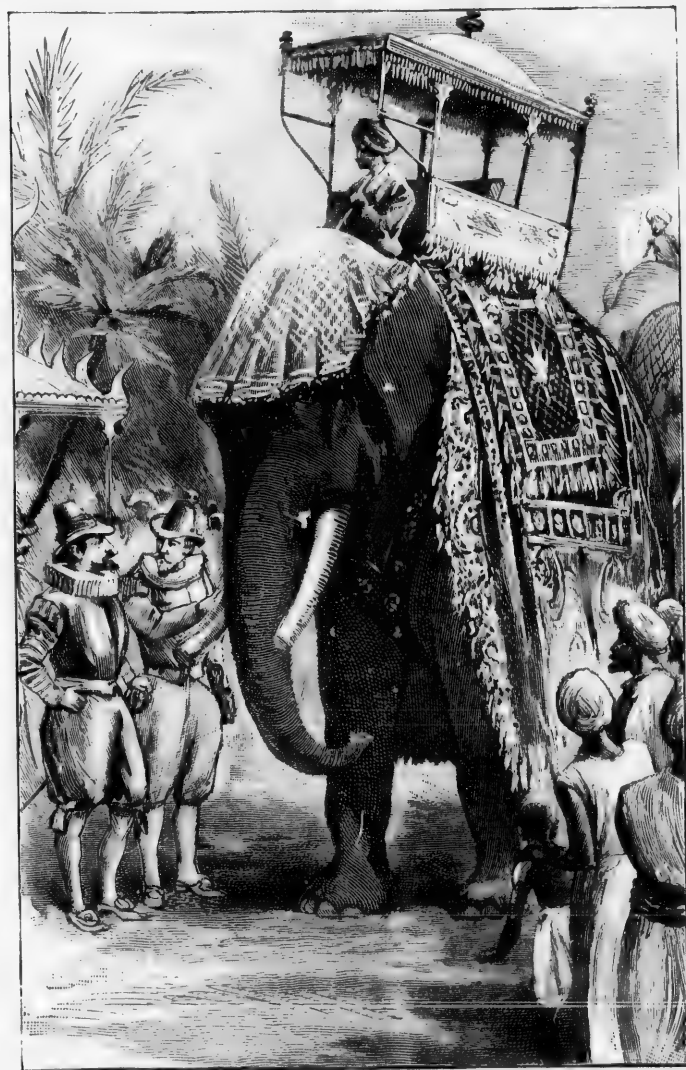
The procession then started for the palace gates, where the Englishmen dismounted and were ushered into the royal presence. After the customary greetings and palaver, Lancaster proceeded to uncover and present his gifts. They were costly enough. "A

bason of silver, with a fountaine in the middest of it, weighing two hundred and five ounces; a great standing cup of silver, a rich looking-glasse, a head-piece with a plume of feathers, a case of very faire daggers, a rich wrought embroidered belt to hang a sword in, and a fan of feathers." The last was not least, for the King appeared much pleased with it, and ordered one of his women slaves to begin fanning him with it forthwith.

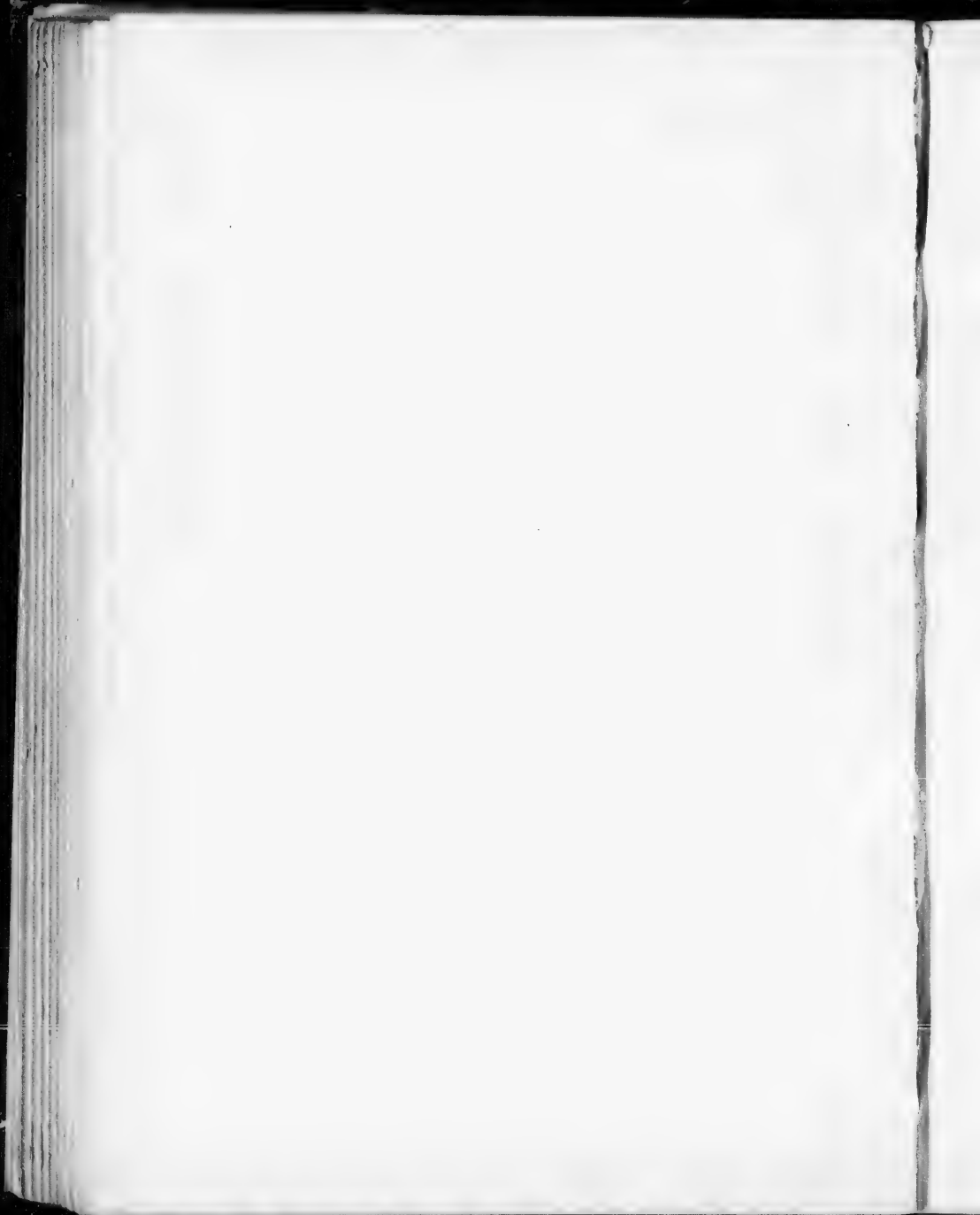
Then they all sat down to a grand banquet, the platter being of pure gold; and the feast was followed by an entertainment of music and dancing. On leaving, the admiral was presented with "a fine white robe of calico, richly wrought with gold, and a very faire girdle of Turkey worke, and two cresses (creases), which are a kind of daggers." And so, with further interchange of courtesies, the Englishmen took their departure, leaving the Queen's letter to be read at leisure by the monarch.

A copy of this letter has come down to us. It is in the usual stately language of royal documents. With many words it urges the King of Acheen to admit English traders, and promises that the consequences will be highly beneficial to his own merchants. One reference to the monopoly hitherto enjoyed by the Spaniards and the Portuguese is interesting; it scornfully questions their exclusive rights, and cleverly persuades the King to favour those nations no more by





"THE INVITATION CAME, WITH TRUE ORIENTAL POMP AND DISPLAY."



appealing to his pride, and reminding him of certain blows which he had inflicted upon the Portuguese in Malacca some thirty years before. The letter then goes on to request leave to establish "a settled house of factorie" at Acheen, with resident English merchants.

Shortly after delivering this letter, Lancaster had a conference with certain of the head-men, and the result was, that not only were the requests of the English granted, but in a most liberal and friendly spirit. And the Portuguese ambassador, on applying for important concessions as a set-off to all this, was sharply snubbed, "and went from the Court much discontented."

One thing, however, marred the satisfaction which Lancaster felt. His pilot, John Davis, had given the London merchants to understand that pepper—a highly-prized commodity in those days—could be got at a certain very low price in Sumatra. Lancaster found to his annoyance that not only was there a very scanty supply to be had, owing to the previous year having proved a bad one, but the price of it was far in excess of that quoted by Davis. The consequences would, he naturally feared, cast a slur either upon his honesty or his business sagacity; and this was mortifying after all the trust that had been reposed in him.

The summer days went by and September came, and Lancaster felt it was time to visit other ports to com-

plete his freight. So leaving two of the merchants behind at Acheen, under the King's protection, to buy up any further quantities of pepper which they could get, the ships sailed away towards the Straits of Malacca.

The adventurers do not seem to have done any business; but they came back well-laden for all that. For, one afternoon while cruising in the Straits, a great Portuguese merchantman of 900 tons burden came in sight, and at once all eyes were upon her. The guns of the *Hector* assailed her as she drew near, and she returned the fire, but a volley from the admiral's ship disabled her, and she ceased to resist. The swift closing-in of the tropical night put an end to the unequal combat, for the attacking force feared lest a chance shot might sink their prize. They lay round her through the night, and when the eastern sky reddened with the dawn, the work of unlading her was quietly and methodically set about. No violence was used. The captain and officers were temporarily put on board the three English vessels, and then her crew lowered the cargo, bale by bale and package by package, into the English boats lying alongside.

The work occupied about five or six days, and some nine hundred and fifty "packes of calicoes and pintados," besides large quantities of rice and other stores, were transferred. It was a big haul, and Lancaster — after the curious fashion which strikes

us of to-day as so incongruous, but was so entirely sincere—thanked Providence devoutly for throwing such rich booty in his way, and thus supplying what he despaired of getting by peaceful trading.

The Portugal ship was on her way from a port in the Bay of Bengal to Malacca, and she carried, besides her crew, nearly six hundred souls—men, women, and children. For them it must have been a sufficiently frightening time.

As the last boatloads of cargo were moving off from the ship, signs of a break in the weather were noticed. Her captured officers were hastily taken back and put aboard, and the English then departed, leaving her riding safely at anchor.

As they again came in view of Acheen, they witnessed, at too close proximity to be pleasant, *a water-spout!* It was a new sight to many of the sailors, and they stared in terror at the whirling column that joined the low clouds and the tossing sea, threatening destruction to any bark that came too near.

They found all well at Acheen, where the two merchants had been busy buying up pepper and cloves and cinnamon. These were stowed away in the *Ascension*, and, with a sheaf of letters to friends at home, she was sent back to England.

Lancaster intended with the two remaining ships to visit Bantam in the Island of Java, and went to bid good-bye to the friendly monarch who had made their

stay at Acheen so prosperous. He gave to Lancaster a letter of goodwill written in Arabic for Queen Elizabeth, with a gift of gold-embroidered garments and a ring of gold set with a fine ruby.

An interesting incident occurred while the visitors were about to depart. It is thus related by the old writer: "And when the generall tooke his leave the King said unto him, Have you the Psalmes of David extant among you? The generall answered, Yea, and we sing them daily. Then said the King, I and the rest of these nobles about me will sing a Psalme to God for your prosperitie; and so they did very solemnly. And after it was ended the King said, I would heare you sing another Psalme, although in your owne language. So there being in the company some twelve of us, we sang another Psalme; and after the Psalme was ended the generall tooke his leave of the King."

So, in this pleasant fashion, the interview closed, and with a final exchange of kindly words the royal host and his guests parted. On the 9th of November the English ships sailed away, and one morning in mid-December they entered the port of Bantam. A tremendous loadside from the *Red Dragon* and the *Hector*, "such as had never been rung there before that day," announced their arrival, and no doubt the good folks of Bantam were duly impressed. Lancaster presented his letters of introduction to the King, who was quite a young lad, and met with a

friendly reception. Trade was permitted, and in return for English goods and hard cash, two hundred and seventy-six bags of pepper were taken on board the ships. (There were but two now, for the *Susan* had lately been sent back, like the *Ascension*, well laden with spices, to England.)

The natives of Java were notorious for theft and pilfering; but the English were not much troubled. We are told the reason. The King gave them permission to kill any of the Javanese who were found breaking into their lodgings, and, says the narrator naively, "after foure or five were thus slaine, we lived in reasonable peace and quiet."

By the 10th February it was time to depart, and Lancaster made a few last arrangements. He despatched a pinnace, with twelve men and several merchants to the Moluccas, to trade there and found a settlement, and be ready for the next English fleet that should be sent out to the Indies. Eight men and three merchants were left behind at Bantam, with similar instructions.

The two ships then stood out to sea, but the captain of the *Hector*, John Middleton, had succumbed to fever before the homeward voyage was begun. The passage to the Cape of Good Hope seems to have been a terrible one. More than one great storm burst upon them, and the mariners were at their wits' ends to know how to keep their craft afloat. Every sail

had to be taken in. The *Red Dragon* had her rudder torn away, and both the vessels leaked dangerously. Torrents of rain and cutting sleet and snow drenched the poor mariners to the skin, and despair and utter weariness seized upon them as they drifted before the gale.

The *Hector* bravely kept company with her half-disabled consort; and this was in itself a source of comfort. Her crew, moreover, as soon as the weather moderated, lent their aid in refitting the sister ship with an extemporised rudder, and, under fairer skies, the two battered vessels ran on to St. Helena, where, after *three months'* tossing on the high seas out of sight of land, the crews were glad to set foot on shore. The wild goats of the island fell to the guns of the more nimble marksmen, and the supply of fresh meat staved off the scurvy and fever that was already rife on board.

The remainder of the voyage was uneventful; and on the 11th of September the two ships anchored safely in English waters. Captain Lancaster was knighted for his great achievement; but honour is due also to the nameless seamen who endured with him the risks of a climate with which few, except Davis, their pilot, were familiar, and the hardships and perils of that stormy passage when hope was well-nigh lost.



## WITH BARENTS TO NOVA ZEMBLA

1594-1597

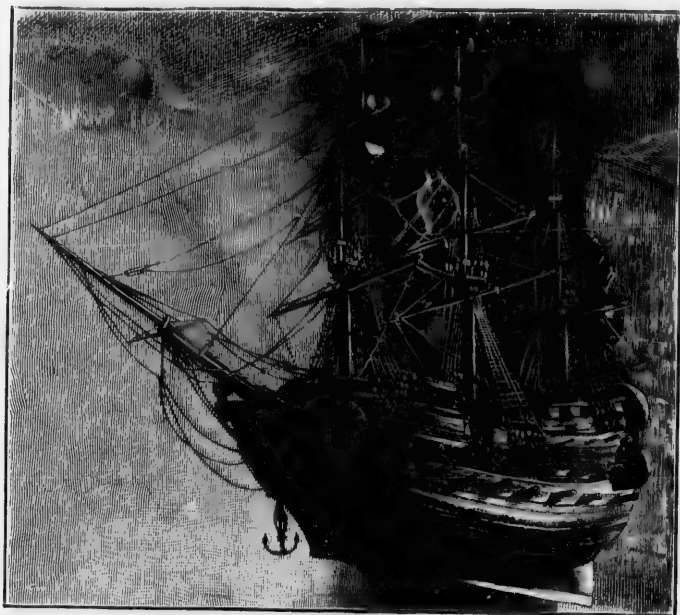


EVERYONE who has read his history well knows something of the brave struggle for freedom which little Holland made against her great and cruel enemy, Spain. He will remember how long that struggle had to be kept up before the fight for liberty was won, and the Spanish troops were at last withdrawn.

While it lasted, every device was used to crush these gallant Netherlanders. Oppressive laws were made that took away their rights, the least resistance was savagely punished, and time after time the streets of the quaint old towns ran with the blood of the noblest and bravest of the citizens.

As if this was not enough, a blow was struck at the very root of their prosperity. Their sea trade was interfered with. Holland is not rich, like other countries, in iron or coal or the precious metals; she has no vast plains for growing corn; and the day of

great factories had not yet come. Trade was what her people lived by. They despatched their clumsy, but well-manned and well-handled, ships to far-off foreign ports, especially to India and the sunny islands of the Eastern seas; and the silks and spices, drugs



MODEL OF ARMED DUTCH MERCHANTMAN OF THE PERIOD.

and gems, with which the vessels came back laden, meant goodly fortunes to those who had sent them out.

To strike at these sturdy subjects of his through their shipping, the Spanish King believed, would be to quickly and effectually cripple them. The Dutch

merchantmen were no match for the great galleons that swooped upon them; and as the way to the Indies lay past the coasts of Spain and Portugal, it was easy enough for the Dons to intercept them.

The poor Hollanders were in a dilemma. If their trade, their very means of living, was to be maintained, their sea captains must either fight the Spaniards or avoid them. To attempt the former seemed hopeless. And yet how was the latter alternative to be acted upon? It was a knotty question. Many a grizzled head was bent over the queer old sea-charts with repeated shakes of honest perplexity and much knitting of brows. Many an eager discussion was waged between be-ringed and be-ruffed burghers and weather-beaten skippers and pilots; and many a pipe was smoked out in fruitless debate.

At last someone threw out a suggestion--a very bold suggestion it sounded, but there was sense in it. "What," said he, "is the use of trying to run the gauntlet of the Spanish ships that are always watching for us as we go south? The northern ocean is grey and cheerless, but at least it is free from that terror. Let us sail northward and eastward, instead of southward and eastward."

"But," was the reply of many, "surely we shall find the way is blocked by the ice."

"Well," retorted the advocates of the scheme, "we can only tell that by trying. Heaven knows how

many of our traders have died by Spanish treachery and cruelty. It is worth risking a few more lives to find out a trade route along which they will not care to molest us."

Thus arose the great question of a North-East Passage—never so popular, indeed, as that of the North-West Passage which our English adventurers essayed so often, but exacting nevertheless a heavy tribute of brave lives.

The scheme once proposed and discussed, it was not long before money and men were forthcoming. To three burghers of Middelburg in Zeeland, and Enckhuysen in West Friesland, belongs the honour of making the first move. Two ships were fitted out by them, and the command given to Cornelis Nai.

Amsterdam determined not to be outdone. In those days the city was thrice as bustling and thrice as important. Built as it is at the south-west corner of the huge bay known as the Zuyder Zee, the largest of vessels could anchor close in, and many of them were towed up those convenient canals or water-streets which intersect the city, and were moored directly opposite their owner's door. The place had a savour of hemp and tar and salt sea-brine about it, and the familiar sight of silken bales and kegs of spices being brought up from below decks, and carried into the roomy store-cellars of the merchants' houses, naturally stimulated in all the boys of Amsterdam a taste for

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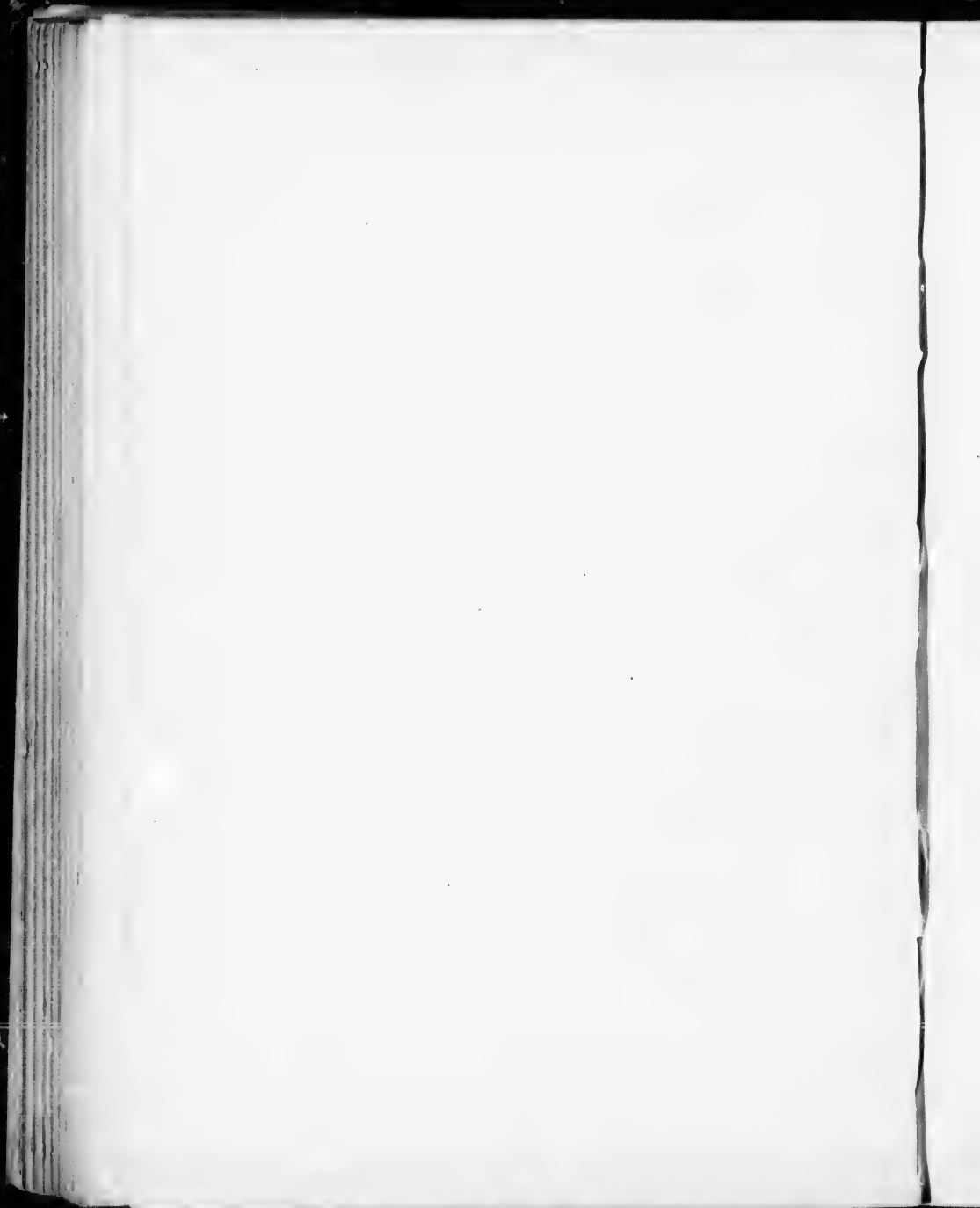
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DISCUSSING THE POSSIBILITY OF A NORTH-EAST PASSAGE.





a sea-calling, or for a trade which depended on the sea.

The name of the vessel now fitted out by the city was the *Mercury*, and the command was given to William Barents, one of her sailor-citizens.

William Barents (or, to spell the name correctly, Willem Barentszoon) was a native of Friesland, and was well qualified for the post. He was an experienced navigator, a man of great courage and perseverance, and one whose character made him respected and readily obeyed by the crews.

On the 5th of June, 1594, the little fleet of four small ships left the Texel. Orders had been given to keep company as far as Kildin, on the coast of Lapland, but after that the Amsterdam vessel and a fishing-boat, which Barents took with him, were to continue the voyage by a different route, namely, round to the north of Nova Zembla, instead of between it and the Russian mainland.

On June 29th Barents parted from the others and sailed away, sighting Nova Zembla on the 4th July, and, before he rejoined his comrades, is reckoned to have accomplished altogether about 1,700 miles—a marvellous feat, when we find, by his journal, how many hindrances and perils he encountered. The whole fleet, having come together once more, returned to Holland in September.

The report brought home roused much interest, and

the States-General resolved to fit out a bigger fleet next year. Accordingly, in the spring seven ships were got ready. Amsterdam provided two, Zeeland two, Enckhuysen two, and Rotterdam one. So great was the hope of getting through the far-off Straits of Waygatz to Japan and China, that all the ships carried merchandise with "factors" (merchants) to do business with the foreign people. The chief of these factors, and the one who represented Amsterdam, was Jacob van Heemskereck. He was a young fellow of good family and great gallantry, and was destined to die in battle for his country against Spain a few years later; the sea-fight took place off Gibraltar, and proved a glorious victory, seven of the Spanish vessels being burned, and most of the others sunk. At the time of our story Heemskereck was about eight-and-twenty, and already full of spirited self-confidence.

William Barents commanded the *Greyhound*, a 200-ton ship of Amsterdam, and went as pilot-major of the fleet. Cornelis Nai was admiral-in-chief. The day of departure from the Texel was Sunday 2nd of July, 1595.

By the time that the trees along the canals at home were beginning to turn yellow under the mid-August sun, the adventurers had rounded the North Cape, made their way across the wide sea that lies to the north of Russia, and had reached the Straits of Waygatz.



Here the prospect was lonely and depressing enough. Snowy plains and ice-bearded cliffs reminded them that they had entered the region of perpetual winter. The few human figures which were seen moving about fled at the approach of a landing-party.

But the following day brought some encouragement. The sailors had found certain sledges, packed with furs, and leather bottles filled with oil, which had been abandoned by the natives in their flight. Not an article was disturbed, and, further to conciliate the owners, slices of bread and Dutch cheese were put temptingly by the side of the goods. During the night these were evidently found and appreciated, and next day, in token of friendship, a large party of these Samoyedes came in their reindeer sledges to meet the Hollanders. With smiles and many gesticulations they tried to show how pleased they were, and when one of the crew, who understood their language, questioned them as to what lay beyond those dreary Straits, they readily stated all they knew, and spoke, among other things, of a warm, sunny sea, which could be reached by long journeying.

Naturally, Barents and his men caught at this eagerly. It was a very vague piece of information, but it agreed with what they had believed when they set out. Much elated, the landing-party returned to the ships, and made preparations for sailing eastward in the direction indicated by the natives. But their

hopes were not to be fulfilled. The ice closed in, barring the way; a sea-fog settled down, thick enough to hide one vessel from another, and this was succeeded by a contrary wind, which completed their discomfiture.

On the 6th of September, while they were labouring to get past a certain island, permission was given for a boat's crew to go ashore. This led to an exciting adventure.

The rocks hereabout glistened and glinted in the sunshine, owing to their being full of bright crystals. These the men desired to gather, and with all the delight of a party of school-boys out bird's-nesting, they set to work, scrambling up the great boulders, snatching at the crystals in the clefts and crevices, and shouting with pleasure whenever they came upon a particularly fine one. In the midst of this pleasant exercise a cry of distress came from behind one of the rocks. Everyone hurried to see what was the matter. A savage growl made them quicken their steps. There, in the grip of a huge snow-bear, was one of their comrades. Hastily they ran for their weapons, but when they returned the poor fellow was past help. At their shout the monster looked up, licking his red-stained jaws, and then calmly went on lapping the dead man's blood. When, however, his assailants came near and lunged at him with their sharp lances, he turned savagely upon them, and the whole party

beat a retreat to the boats. Loaded muskets were procured, and, after a long and dangerous fight, the enormous brute was despatched. He had killed two men, and his skin was carried away as a trophy to show to the good folks in Amsterdam.

This untoward event seems to have been the last weight in the scale, determining the adventurers to give up the attempt for that year. Barents and



A TERROR OF THE ARCTIC SEAS.

young Heemskereck wanted two ships' crews to winter in those regions and continue the voyage as soon as the ice pack should break up under the warm spring winds. They themselves would have been ready enough to stay at all hazard, but the men shrank from the prospect. We cannot blame them. Wintering among the Arctic ice is terrible even in these days of scientific equipment and tinned meats; but these

sturdy Hollanders had neither the experience nor the proper appliances now available. And so it came about that before the month of November was out they had re-crossed the seas, and were once more clasping the hands of their friends on the quays of old Amsterdam.

When the first words of welcome had given place to questions about the results of the expedition, there was much grumbling and shaking of heads on the part of the merchants who had supplied the funds; and when Barents entreated them to allow another attempt to be made, he was told that a trading expedition which brought back a white bearskin and a few rock-crystals was not exactly a paying concern.

However, enthusiasm is infectious. Barents was sure that if properly searched for, the North-East Passage might yet be found. He went from one person to another, talking in his cheerful, persuasive way, and at last so far succeeded that the money was forthcoming to fit out two small ships, and the Government offered a large sum, and special trading rights to the owners of the ships, if the China Seas could be reached by the new route.

Heemskereck was the nominal, and Barents the actual, leader of the new expedition, and they picked their men wisely. Food stores and merchandise were stowed away on board, and on the 10th of May, 1596, the two vessels left Amsterdam for the dreary northern seas.

As they got into high latitudes they were first mystified and then delighted with what to them was a novel and extraordinary sight. They had reached the realm of the midnight sun. For six long weeks darkness never settled down upon the grey seas through which the two little ships ploughed their way. Such books as the men had brought with them could be read distinctly at any hour of the twenty-four, and those of the crew who had left wife and children behind them smiled at the thought of the stories they would take home. Sunshine at midnight! How the eyes of Hans and Gredel would sparkle, and how their round cheeks would redden with excitement, as the wonderful tale went on. Mock suns, too! Three shining at once—one on either side of the real sun, and ringed round with rainbows; looking for all the world as if the Lapland witches were playing tricks with the sky! The children would say they had heard nothing stranger, not even in the forest legends told them by their nurse as they sat on winter nights beside the cosy kitchen hearth, with its quaint picture tiles.

But something besides marvels was in store for these brave Amsterdam sailors. Hitherto they had fared prosperously enough, circumnavigating what we now know to be the Spitzbergen group of islands, and meeting with various new and interesting adventures. But Barents and the other captain, Jan Corneliszoon

Rijp by name, could not agree about the route. On July 1st they had a final discussion, the result of which was that the two ships separated. "It was agreed that wee should follow on our course, and hee his."

Of Rijp and his subsequent doings—where he went and when he returned—scarcely anything is known. The record we have deals solely with Barents and Heemskerek. They held on their way eastward till the west coast of Nova Zembla was reached, and in safety they rounded the north-eastern end of that country. Then their troubles began. On all sides the thin flakes of floating ice got more and more dense, until the ship's nose could no longer butt its way through, and a solid glistening barrier resisted their attempts to advance. Huge towering cliffs of ice moved past them, threatening, if they toppled and fell, to crush ship and crew alike. The unfamiliar noise of the grinding, crunching bergs was terrifying, and as there was often a chain of ice-blocks between the vessel and the shore, it was not pleasant either for the watch on deck or those who were trying to sleep below to hear after nightfall the growls of hungry bears. At last the ice-pack closed in all round, and forced itself like a wedge underneath the vessel, till the latter lay as if stranded, tilted up against a great hummock.

King Frost had fairly caught these intruders upon his territory.

It was the last day of August when this appalling

fact was realised. Fearing that as the pressure on the ship grew greater her stout timbers would be crushed and she would founder, the men at once hoisted out the boats and dragged them to a place on the ice. Then some of the stores were got out, and the building of a hut was commenced. There were no trees to cut down, but a good many had been drifted to a spot some two miles off and thrown up on the beach. A supply of this timber was fetched on rough sledges;<sup>1</sup> the men worked hard, and their willing hands soon erected a very roomy and substantial house. The ship's furniture was used to fit up the interior, and a big barrel fixed on the roof was made to serve as a chimney. Altogether, things began to look more cheerful, and as soon as the whole company had taken up its abode in the house it began to bear a cosy and home-like appearance.

The white bears haunted the neighbourhood persistently, no doubt with pleasant expectations of their own. No sailor dare stir abroad unless armed, and everyone kept on the alert, ready at a moment's notice to join in driving off or attacking and killing these prowling monsters. In time the men got quite expert in the use of their spears, and many a thick, warm skin was added to the stock of rugs and clothing;

<sup>1</sup> The illustration of this, and those of three other incidents, have been closely reproduced from the quaint woodcuts in the original edition of Gerrit de Veer's account of the Barents expedition.

but more than once Bruin turned furiously at bay, and a battle royal ensued, in which the men had several narrow escapes.

With October the cold increased. It was a more difficult enemy to fight than the bears. It nipped the hands and feet and face; it kept everyone on the move; and when the sailors turned in to their sleeping quarters for the night it crept in after them. They set themselves tiring tasks just for the sake of exercise; they played games and romped about like children; they made traps and set them; they sawed up wood for firing; they turned tailor, and stitched away at their bearskin and foxskin garments; and the cold grew worse and worse.

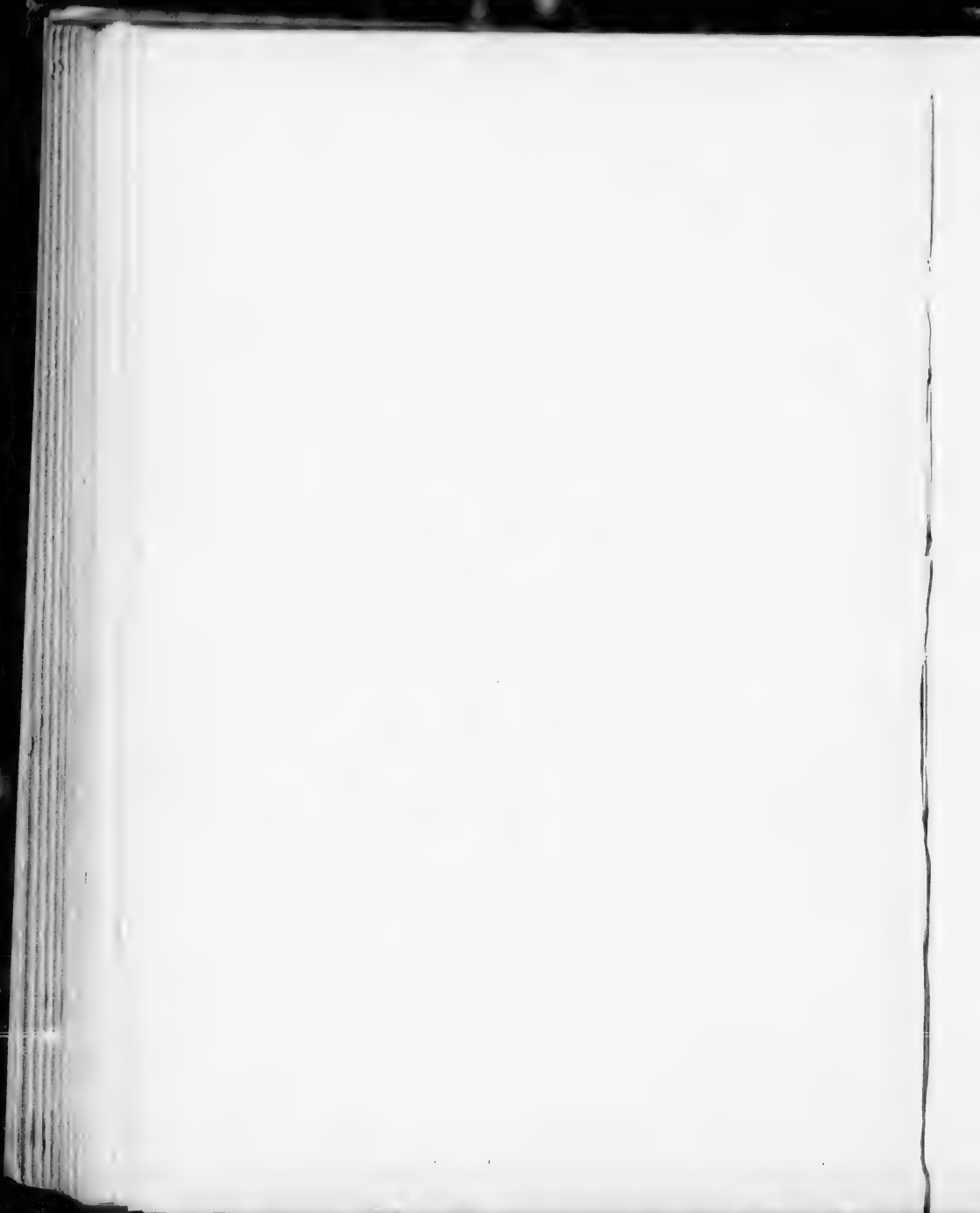
Then the very daylight forsook them. Early in November they saw the last of the sun—a thin red strip just peering above the horizon—and the long Arctic night settled down upon the desolate icefields, and the tiny encampment, and the dismantled ship.

It was a most trying time. The spirits of the party sank at the prospect before them. Eleven weeks of darkness had to be lived through before the sunlight would again gladden their eyes, and even then there was the question of how to reach home. The conduct of Lorents and Heekskereck under these discouraging circumstances showed the heroism that was in them, and proved how fully they possessed the qualities of the true leader. They did everything that could be



"A SUPPLY OF THE TIMBER WAS FETCHED ON ROUGH SLEDGES."





done to hearten their men. They set them to fresh duties, planned new amusements, and saw to it that each man was well occupied, and not allowed to sit and brood over his troubles.

It would have been easy to lose count of time; but the hour-glasses were kept going, and the long, monotonous days were thus measured and counted. So, though there was no change in the dreary world outside, they knew which day was Christmas and which was the first of the New Year. It was difficult not to be gloomy and anxious on these anniversaries, which at home would be kept with so much mirth and merry-making. For them out here in the terrible North there were no church bells ringing, no evergreen garlands, no children to kiss, no neighbours to greet. Would the old home joys ever be theirs again?

There were, indeed, times when the love of fun and frolic got the better of their melancholy. Then with the help of a slight addition to the usual rations, and another bear's-grease candle or two by way of illumination, the men held revel in the smoky wooden house, and played all sorts of antics in the way that sailors love. It was rather forced fun, but the jests and the laughter and the romping did everyone good, and Heemskerk and Barents looked on well pleased, and "kept the ball rolling."

Still the terrible cold increased. The beer-casks

split with the ice inside them. The fire was piled with fuel, but the house never seemed really warm, and the men lay and shivered, though often so near to the bright glow that their clothing scorched. One December evening, feeling utterly miserable, the men were imprudent enough to dispense with the usual means of ventilation. They blocked up the chimney, sealed up the crevices in the doors, put a large supply of coal on the fire, and turned in for a good night's sleep. Everyone, in more and more sleepy tones, remarked on the success of their plan. "For once we can say we are quite warm and comfortable." At last silence reigned in the house. The thoughts of its drowsy inmates were very pleasant ones, and the outside world, with all its bitter chill and dreariness, was forgotten. So the time went by.

Suddenly, one of the sleepers awoke with a confused sense that something was wrong. A painful feeling of suffocation and giddiness had come over him; he started up and called to his companions; there was no reply. Staggering across the room, he got to the door, clutched at the latch, and tore it open. The icy breath of the winter night struck him as he reeled out on to the snow, and fell. But the fresh air was just what he needed. He shook off the deadly stupor and re-entered the hut. The rush of cold air had already aroused others of the sleepers, and one by one the whole company awoke. It was

indeed a merciful escape. The stifling smoke from the burning coal, having no means of exit, had been filling the apartment, and stupefying the inmates. The very influence which had induced sleep, and given that delightful, dreamy sense of comfort, would before morning have turned the winter house into a chamber of death.

Sick and faint, but grateful for their preservation, the men laid to heart the lesson they had learned, and thanked God for having spared their lives. And so again they took up their monotonous tasks—the narrow round of duties inside their smoky dwelling, the inventing of new means for keeping out the cold, the snaring of the shy white foxes under the starlight, the keeping of the daily journal in which the entries were so much alike.

By the 9th January the weather was less bitter. It had been terrible at times. Shoe-leather had frozen, and the men had to improvise sheepskin foot-gear. On certain days they dared not so much as put their heads outside the door for fear of frost-bite. Once they tried to ascertain which was the way of the wind by fixing a fragment of cloth on a stick and thrusting it up through the chimney-hole; but they had scarcely had time to see which way it blew before it stiffened and grew rigid. At times wild snowstorms swept across the desolate land, and by the end of the year the house was buried so deep that a flight of

steps had to be cut in the frozen drift for the men to get abroad.

On the 16th January, a faint ruddy glow in the sky warned them that the sun would shortly rise to gladden their eyes once more. The welcome *drip, drip*, of snow on the house-roof, melting with the heat of the fire, showed that the cold was no longer so intense. And on the 24th January—a full fortnight before Barents had reckoned it would appear—Heemskereck and Gerrit De Veer (the historian of the voyage) caught sight of the edge of the sun's red disc as they rambled along the seashore. Home they raced with the glad news, but it was pronounced too good to be true. The next two days were misty and overcast, but on the 27th all the men turned out to gaze, for there was the bright orb well risen above the horizon, "which made us all glad, and we gave God hearty thanks for His grace shewed unto us, that that glorious light appeared unto us againe."

Still there was need for patience. The cold was still severe. The supply of fuel began to grow ominously small, and several of the men were sick and disabled. The scarcity of food, also, was making itself felt in the increasing bodily weakness of everyone. Ordinary labours were a weariness, and often the poor fellows left off exhausted in the middle of some task of hauling or lifting, and sat down ready to cry like children.

The bears, too, had to be reckoned with. They had begun to prowl abroad again, since the return of the daylight, and the spears and clumsy matchlocks that menaced them were held now in very feeble and shaking hands. One evening in April a great shaggy brute came sniffing round the house, and the men had barely time to slam to the door before she was heard shuffling down the snow-steps. Finding no means of entrance, she went away, but after dark she returned, and the men suddenly heard a heavy body dragging itself across the roof. Then a low growl was heard, and soon the silence of the night was broken by the most dismal howling and roaring, as the fierce beast tore savagely at the sail which was spread over the roof and secured to the chimney-barrel. Everyone was greatly relieved when she took herself off, having done no further mischief.

By the 1st May, the last bit of beef was eaten, and the sight of the open water not far from their stranded ship made the men eager to be off. Heemskereck wanted to get the injured vessel afloat if it were possible, and postponed the date of departure as long as he dare. But at last, orders were given to get out the two boats, which were lying under the snow, and mend them and provision them for the long journey home. There was much to be done; but, as the old writer says, "the labour and paines that we tooke seemed light and casie unto us, because of the hope

that we had to get out of that wild, desart, irkesome, fearefull, and cold country." Poor fellows! They had suffered long and much, and the very thought of departure put strength and spirit into their bodies, enfeebled with the cold and dull inaction of the terrible winter.

On the 12th June, the men trooped across to the ship where the boats lay, and with hatchets, spades, and pickaxes set to work to cut a passage to the open water. It was no slight task, for the ice lay in great hummocks and sharp ridges, and was encrusted with unmelted snow. Of course a bear—"a great leane bear out of the sea"—came to see what they were doing, and, after pursuing the historian, got shot for her pains.

William Barents then penned a letter, briefly stating the circumstances of their winter sojourn—their enfeebled health, the hardships they had had to endure, and the disablement of their ship. This letter was signed by eleven of the chief men, and, having been placed in a powder-flask, was hung up in the chimney of the house.

A great pile of clothing, implements, and provisions had now to be packed away in the boats, and when this was at last done, the two sick men were fetched from the house on a sledge. Barents himself, alas! was one, having for a long time been ailing. Then, all being ready, the boats were pushed off, and so "committing



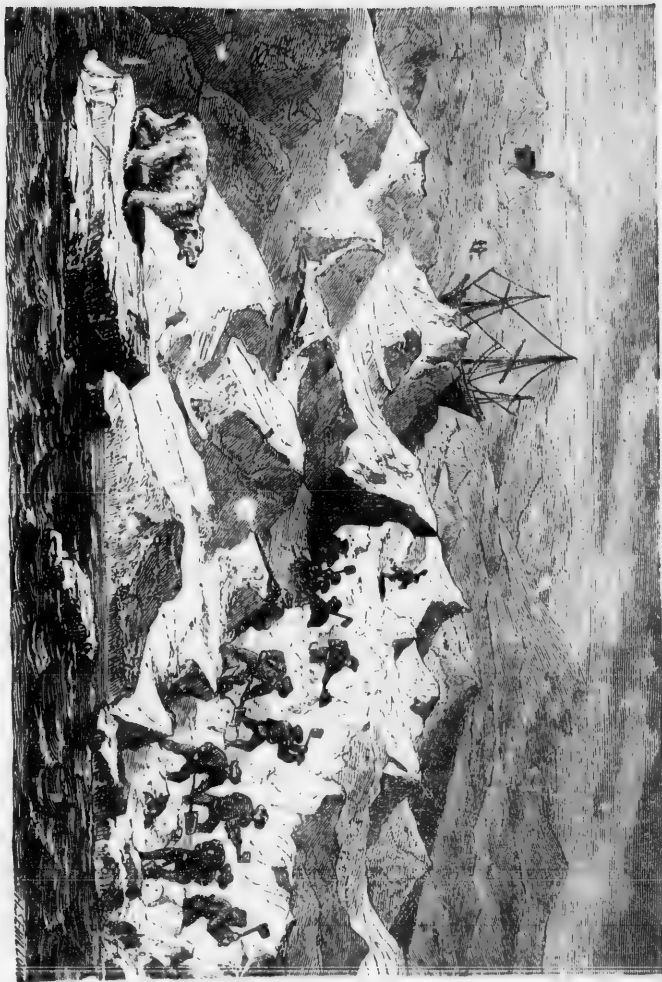
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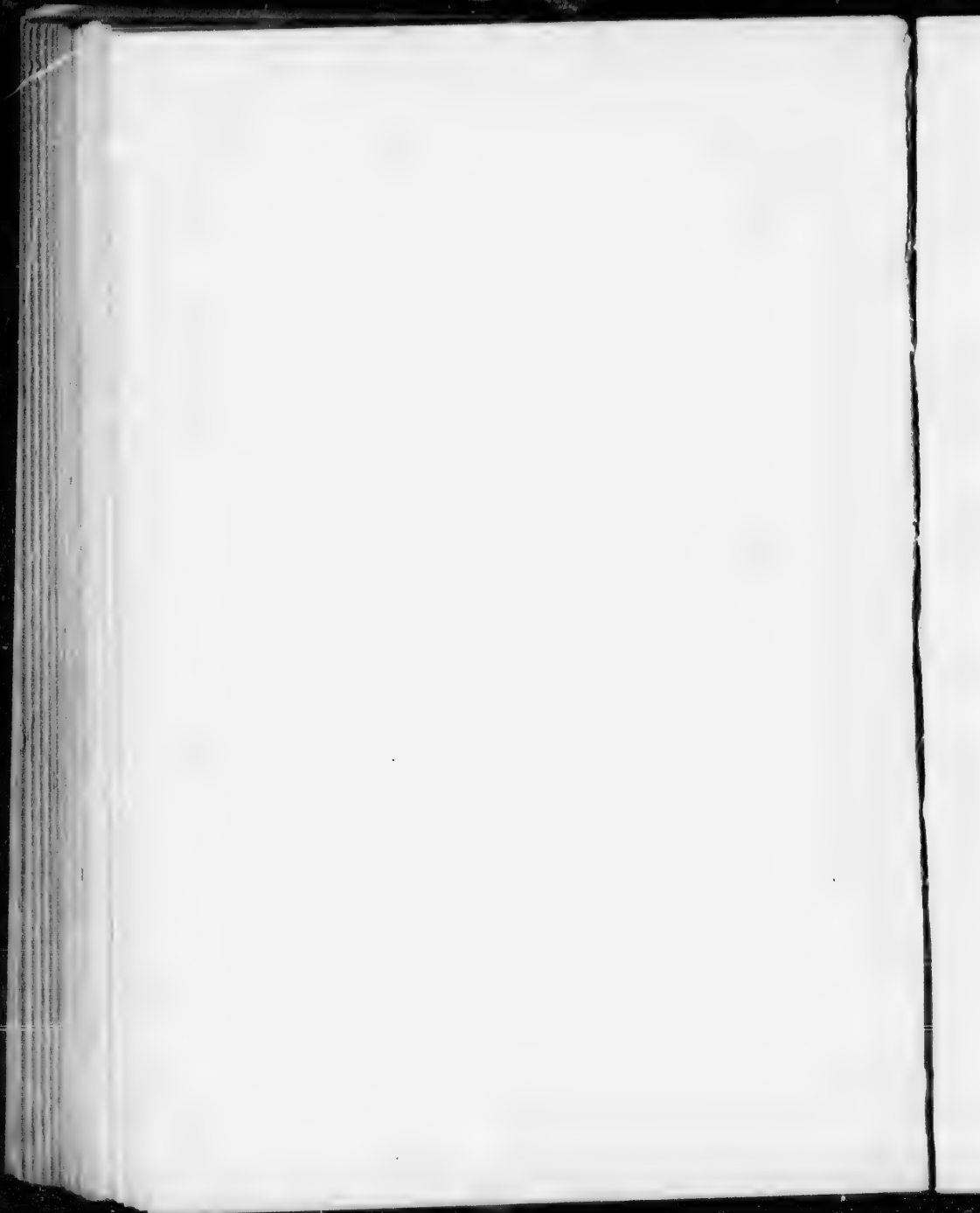
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“THEY SET TO WORK TO CUT A PASSAGE TO THE OPEN WATER.”





ourselves to the will and mercie of God, with a west-north-west wind and an endifferent open water, we set saile and put to sea."

It was on the 14th June when the two boats left the inhospitable shores of Nova Zembla. The first few days of the voyage brought much discomfort and many perils—dank sea-mists and drizzling rains, and dangerous pressure from the loose ice. But all these hardships seemed as nothing beside the loss they were about to suffer in the death of William Barents, their trusted leader and wise pilot. He expired on the 20th June, and his fellow-patient did not long survive him.

With heavy hearts the little company proceeded. At times the men landed and killed birds, and hunted for eggs. Indeed, without these eggs the adventurers would have fared badly enough. Bears were still numerous, and a vigilant watch had to be kept every time the crew moored beside any of the great islands of ice. Sometimes an ice chain stretched across their path, and then would come the laborious task of unlading the boats and dragging them across to the open water.

Yet another danger was encountered on the 20th July, and one which the men entirely brought upon themselves. A great herd of walrus lay basking on an ice-floe, to the number of two hundred or so. Whereupon, just as idle boys on a river sometimes row need-

lessly close to a swan's nest, and hoot the parent birds, so these Dutch seamen (perhaps excited and elated by the open water which now stretched before them) must needs steer alongside the floe, and stir up the great clumsy, inoffensive monsters lying there. There was, of course, a sudden panic and dispersal of the herd, but presently as the men rowed away laughing, round black heads, with fierce bristly lips and long gleaming tusks, bobbed up out of the water all round, till the sea seemed full of them. Braying loudly, they began to bear down upon the boats, and only a favouring wind enabled the dismayed Dutchmen to get safely away. It was a lesson to them to "let sleeping dogs lie"!

On the 28th July, they fell in with two Russian vessels, which they had passed on their outward voyage. The Russians were much perplexed to know why they were returning in such a sorry plight, and asked what had become of the ship. There was an exchange of hospitalities, and the Hollanders proceeded on their way much cheered by the meeting. Scurvy was making terrible inroads on the health and strength of the crews, but speedy relief was obtained whenever a patch of spoon-wort or scurvy-grass was chanced upon. This was most providential, for many of the men were so ill that they could scarcely row, and the sails could only be used now and then.

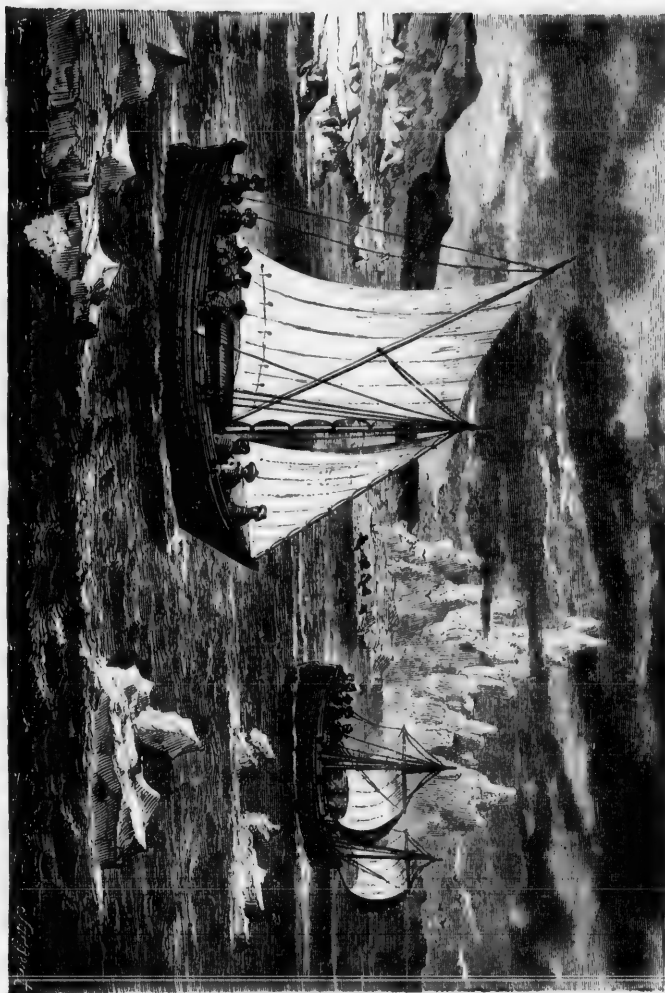
It was finally decided to pass over to the Russian

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THE VOYAGE HOMEWARD IN OPEN BOATS.





main sail, and on the 4th August they stood in close to the low-lying shores about the mouth of the River Petchora. As they sailed along, a tract of green with sundry small trees gladdened their eyes, weary of the ice-fields and weary of "the barren sea." But hunger was now staring them in the face, and it was seriously debated whether they had not better abandon the boats and make their way home overland. Four of the poor fellows who had gone ashore to reconnoitre came back dragging a dead seal which they had found; it was putrid and stinking, but their comrades were scarcely able to persuade them not to eat portions of the carcase, so ravenous were they.

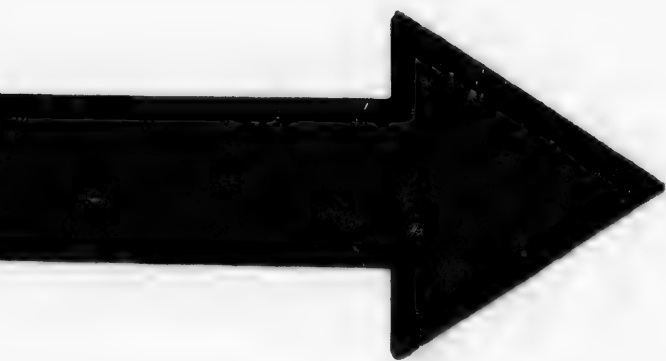
At another point, having beached the boats on account of a heavy gale, torrents of rain fell, and while the crews crouched shivering under the sail-cloth, vivid lightnings lit up the dreary coast, and the sick men lay and trembled at the thunder peals.

Several Russian fishing barks were passed during the next few days. From these food was obtained, and the voyagers deemed themselves "in clover" when they were able to lay to and regale themselves on a pot of boiled meal and water, flavoured with honey and *bacon fat*.

On the 25th August, they reached a familiar point, namely, Kildin on the Lapland Coast. A little further they came upon a house by the shore, and, at their approach, three men and a big dog came out. From these men they inquired if any Dutch ship was likely

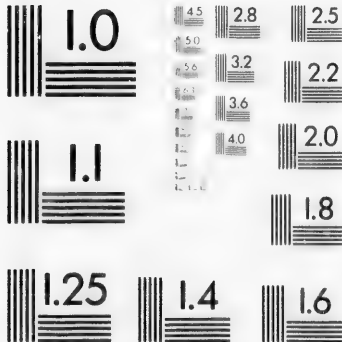






# MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

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to be found at Kola, a well-known port further along the coast. Hearing that there was, they begged the Russians to accompany one of their number to the place. This they would not do, even for money, but they said that a native could be got from a Lapp settlement not far off, and he would be an even better guide.

The waiting time was made pleasant by berry-gathering—bilberries and blackberries being plentiful hereabouts, and most acceptable. At last the Lapp was seen returning. He came alone, but he brought a written message which alike gladdened and puzzled those to whom it was addressed. It was signed "by me, Jan Cornelisz. Rijp," and expressed surprise and delight at finding them in those parts, having long since believed them cast away. Surely, said the sailors on their part, this cannot be the Jan Rijp who commanded our sister ship on the voyage out from Holland a year and more ago? Heemskereck hunted over his papers and drew out a letter which Rijp had once written him, and, when the signatures were compared, there was no longer any room for doubt. Their old comrade had evidently gone home soon after they had parted, and had since come out to those bleak northern coasts on a less ambitious cruise.

While they were still eagerly discussing the letter, a boat came in sight. It was a Russian yawl, and was making straight for where they stood. All eyes were at once upon her, and what a shout went up when it

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was seen that the figures on board were none other than Jan Rijp himself and their messmate whom they had sent to Kola! The meeting was a joyful one, and the stolid Lapp, if he was standing by, must have thought his employers had gone crazy, so boisterous was their gladness at the unexpected reunion.

Rijp had thoughtfully brought an instalment of food and wine to meet their present wants, and it was with grateful as well as with lightened hearts that the little band of fellow-countrymen sat down to the unwonted feast.

The Lapp was not forgotten. Beside the payment agreed upon, gifts were added in recognition of the wonderfully speedy manner in which he had brought back the letter—less than half the time he had taken when going with his sailor companion. The simple fellow was made happy by being rigged out as a Hollander with an assortment of cast-off garments.

It did not take long to launch the boats and proceed to Kola, where in the river lay Jan Rijp's good ship, and a warm welcome awaited them from the crew, some of whom had taken part in the previous year's expedition. "On the 3rd September," says the record, "we unladed all our goods, and there refreshed ourselves after our toylesome and weary journey, and the great hunger that we had indured, thereby to recover our healthes and strengthes againe." The two stout boats in which they had made the long voyage of sixteen

hundred miles, through the desolate northern seas, were laid up under cover in the merchants' quarter of the town, and crowds gathered to stare at them and ask questions about the intrepid navigators.

And so Heemskerck and his men sailed home with Jan Rijp, and on the first day of November they set foot on the stones of Amsterdam. Out of the original crew of seventeen, only twelve survived, and these had long since been counted as cast away and dead. When it was noised abroad that Heemskerck's men were come back, everyone rushed to catch sight of them, and the burghers' wives lifted up their rosy-cheeked babes to see the travel-stained voyagers in their thick clothes and white fox-skin caps, as they went, by special invitation, to tell their story before Prince Maurice and the foreign ambassadors.

There was only one sobering thought amid the general enthusiasm—the sense of sad regret that William Barents, the true, stout-hearted captain who had done so much to cheer and sustain the hearts of his men, had not lived to share with them the welcome home.

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#### NOTE.

An interesting discovery of relics relating to the Barents expedition was made by an Englishman as recently as 1876. In his yacht, *Glow-worm*, Mr.

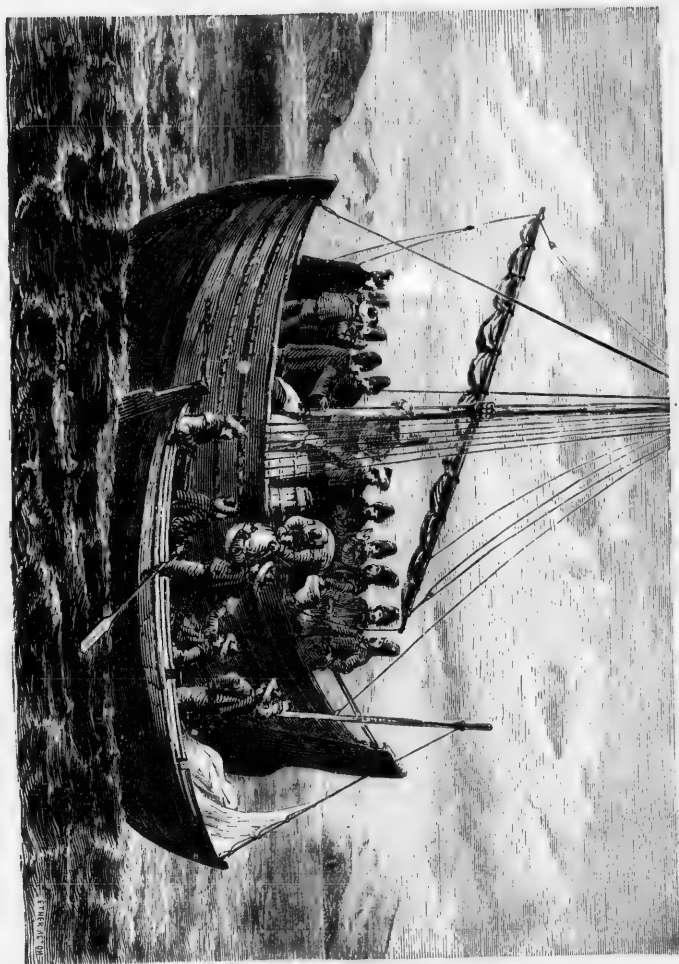
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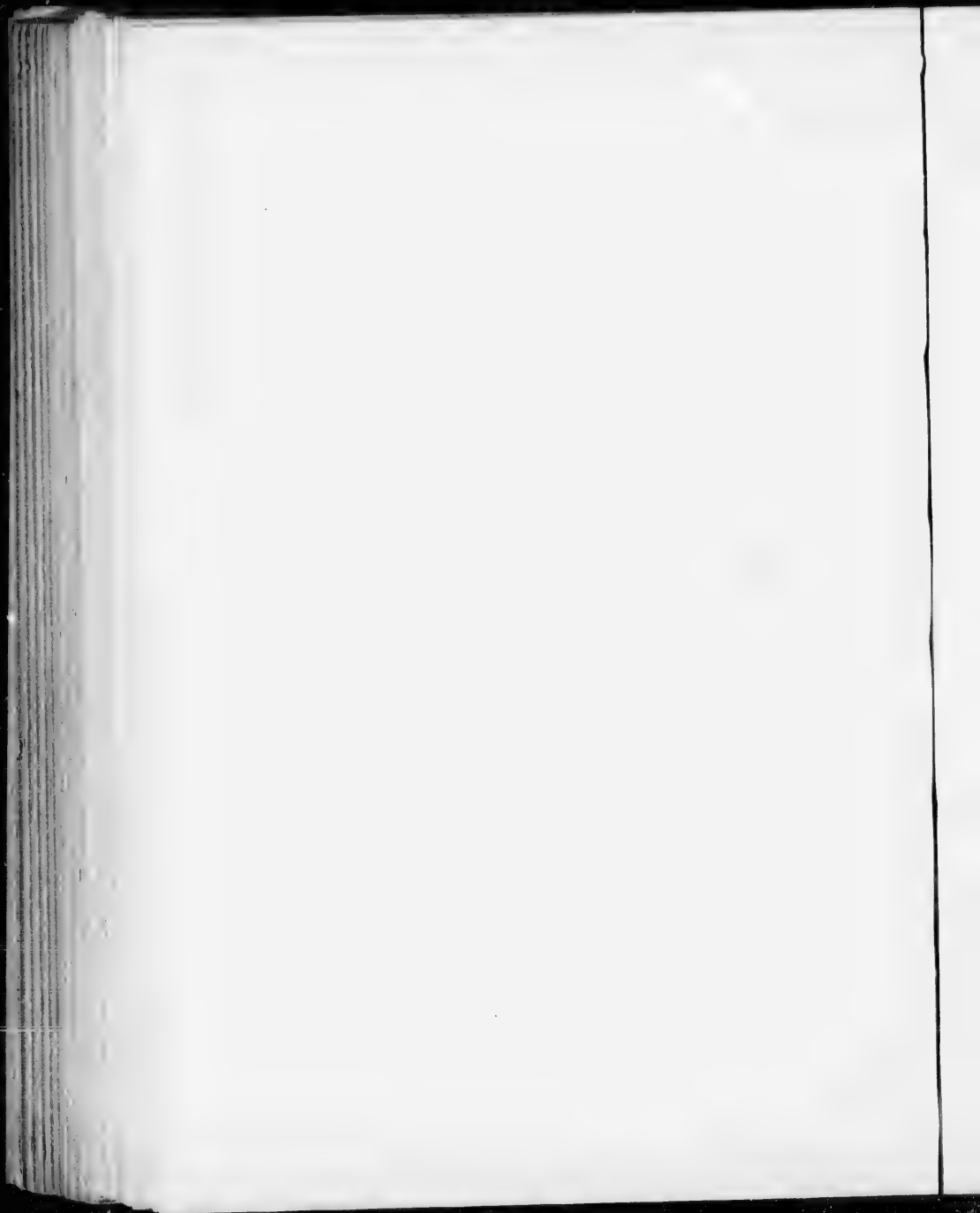
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OBTAINING FOOD FROM A RUSSIAN FISHING BARK.







Charles Gardiner ventured into the ice-laden waters of the Kara Sea, and on 29th of July reached Barents Haven. Amid fog and drifting snow he set to work diligently and methodically to find out how much remained of the old wooden house erected two hundred and eighty years before.

The structure itself was in ruins, but a hundred or more articles were picked out and brought away:—"Remains of carpenters' tools, broken parts of old weapons, and sailors' materials; a wooden stamp with a seal, a leaden inkstand, two goose-feather writing-pens, a small iron pair of compasses, a little cubic die-stone, a heavy harpoon with ring, besides twenty well-preserved wax candles, probably the oldest in existence. Besides these, there were three Dutch books, two Dutch coins, an old Amsterdam ell-measure, together with the ship's flag of Amsterdam, having been the first European colour which passed a winter in the Arctic regions."

Perhaps the most interesting find of all was that of the letter or statement written by Barents and hung up, just before leaving, in a powder-flask suspended in the chimney. The writing, all but a few words, was found to be quite legible. All these relics were courteously and generously handed over by Mr. Gardiner to the Dutch Government.

He, however, was not the first to visit and explore the spot. Five years earlier, Captain Elling Carlsen,

sailing from Hammerfest, had made his way to Barents Haven, and digging about on the spot, had found the house fallen into decay, but otherwise just as the Hollanders had left it.

The friendly snow had covered it up in a firm white casing, and the various articles which had been left behind in the house when Barents and his men set out on their homeward journey were in surprisingly good condition. Five seaman's chests were found, which contained files, sledge-hammers, compasses, engravings, a flute, etc. The fireplace had evidently occupied the middle of the floor, and two copper cooking-pans still stood on the long since extinguished embers. The great clock, which for a while was kept going to mark the weary hours was also found, and the alarum belonging to it. There were also several candlesticks, a crowbar, a great iron chest; and a grindstone, which had probably sharpened the point of many a hunting-spear and the edge of many an axe.

All these relics were brought away, and were finally purchased by the Dutch Government to be preserved as national treasures in the Naval Department at the Hague.

## “NORTH-EAST OR NORTH-WEST?”

THE FOUR VOYAGES OF HENRY HUDSON

1607-1610



HOW you English leave your dead about the world," was the remark of a foreigner to one of our countrymen.

Whether that was said flippantly, or scornfully, or with a secret grudging admiration, matters not. It is true—and we are proud that it is true. We of the great Anglo-Saxon race are a restless, roving people, who turn up in all sorts of places, and have a finger in all sorts of enterprises. But we are more than mere desultory globe-trotters. The Englishman abroad is a strenuous worker, who usually sets his hand to a big task as much from the love of carrying it through and conquering difficulties as from the shrewd hope of solid gain, which was his excuse for taking it up. Indeed this is one of the most striking characteristics of the typical Englishman—the union of what we may call a business aim

with a strong guiding sense of duty. This spirit has carried us far, by land and by water.

"We tracked the winds of the world to the steps of their very thrones;

The secret parts of the world were salted with our bones."

Of the "Old Voyagers" who were English, how many have died far away from the little island which gave them birth! Sir Hugh Willoughby, on the bleak Lapland shore; Sir Humphrey Gilbert in the waves of the West Atlantic; John Davis, beneath the knives of Japanese pirates; Hawkins and Drake, in West Indian waters; Baffin, on the coast of Persia; and, last but not least, HENRY HUDSON, whose grave among the icebergs of the Arctic seas no human finger has ever pointed out.

Two great water - ways, Hudson Strait and the Hudson River, and the vast expanse of Hudson Bay, commemorate the work of this bold explorer. But historically the names are misleading, for the places had been marked out on maps prepared long before Hudson's day. What he really did was to go over the explorations of other and earlier adventurers, determining this and that, and making many valuable observations.<sup>1</sup> Of all the work done by the

<sup>1</sup> "Besides his own original discoveries," asserts one of his biographers, "he visited during the four last years of his life very nearly all the northern shores of Europe and eastern America which had been visited by his predecessors during the previous century, and everywhere his presence left at least some traces,"

old navigators in these cold seas that of Hudson may be said to have been the most thorough.

We know singularly little about his life. A very imperfect record of the last four years is all that is spared us.

He made four voyages in that time, and in each case the object was to reach the eastern shores of Asia by a short route through the unknown northern seas. It was the old tempting prospect of trade with China which drew him, as it had drawn others. The glittering prize was too great to be readily abandoned. It had cost many lives already, it was to cost one more in the case of Henry Hudson.

We usually think of this navigator solely in connection with North America, where his name figures so prominently on the map. But, as a matter of fact, he thrice set sail with the purpose of attempting to find a *North-East* Passage. Only his last voyage and the latter part of the third are associated with North America.

It mattered little to him whether Cathay was to be reached by a north-east or a north-west route. Finding one way blocked he turned to discover some other channel. The *persistence of his efforts*, first in one direction, then in another, forms, perhaps, Hudson's chief title to fame, among voyagers.

The North-East Passage was the object of his first voyage, and it was undertaken in the year 1607 on

behalf of the Muscovy Company (an association formed in the reign of Queen Mary for purposes of trade with Russia).

The first part of the route lay round the northern coasts of Norway and Lapland, and led past Spitzbergen or by Nova Zembla. On this occasion Hudson chose the former and more outlying course. Spitzbergen had been discovered only some eleven years before, and little was known about it.

In Bishopsgate Street, London, there may still be seen the quaint little church of Saint Ethelburga's, where on 19th April, 1607, small company of mariners met to partake of the sacrament. They were about to leave England on a quest which all knew to be full of risks, and out of the twelve who knelt to receive the cup some possibly might never return. The company consisted of "Henry Hudson, master; William Colines, his mate; James Young, John Colman, John Cooke, James Beubery, James Skrutton, John Pleyce, Thomas Baxter, Richard Day, James Knight, and John Hudson, a boy,"—all good English names. The boy mentioned was the captain's son, who was destined to share the cruel fate meted out to him four years later.

On the 1st of May the crew weighed anchor at Gravesend. Steering north by way of the Shetlands, they sighted and sailed along the Greenland coast from the 13th to the 22nd of June. In those days the coast

was more approachable; a broad margin of ice has formed since then, and the whereabouts of the places mentioned in the journal are not easy to guess. North-eastward, then, they went, with shrouds and sails freezing. At times snow fell, and still more often a thick fog hung like a low cloud over the sea. For eighteen days they never saw the sun.

About the 25th June the increasing number of birds warned them that they were approaching land, and two days later the ice-bound coast of Spitzbergen (then called Newland) rose in sight. Creeping in, they found themselves in a bay ringed round with mountains. Underneath their keel the still dark water was too deep for them to fathom.

Two simple statements in the journal were destined to have important consequences. They recur several times, "We saw many seals," "We saw many whales." Mention is also made of the walrus. The publication of these facts led directly to the Spitzbergen fisheries being established. In 1613 the Muscovy Company obtained sole rights; and their agents stood upon those rights in a sufficiently truculent manner, to the discomfiture of foreign fishing-barks who came to get their share.

On the 27th July the ice again made progress dangerous, and the crashing and jarring of the loose masses became so alarming that the crew hoisted out their one boat and endeavoured to tow the ship out



into clearer water. But a heavy sea was running, and the rowers were not sorry when a breeze sprang up which filled the sails and saved them further exertion.

About this time Hudson made one of his discoveries. He had wished to get round the north of Greenland into Davis Straits, and so home. He found there was no water-way existing. So he desisted and came home, able to write against yet one more Arctic door, one more supposed outlet, the words, "No thoroughfare." Some of Hudson's most useful discoveries were to be of this negative kind, showing what could *not* be done and therefore what need not be further attempted.

The homeward journey was made *via* Cherie Island and the Faroes, and by the 15th of September the ship was in the Thames.

On the 22nd April, 1608, Hudson and his little son, with a crew of thirteen hands, again left London, in the service of the Muscovy Company.

Rounding the northernmost point of the Norway coast, they met the loose ice, and ran boldly in among it. One morning there was great excitement on board. Says the old record: "One of our companie looking overboord saw a mermaid, and calling up some of the companie to see her, one more came up, and by that time she was come close to the ship's side, looking earnestly on the men. A little after, a sea came and overturned her. . . . Her body was as big as one of us; her skin very white, and long haire hanging downe

behinde, of colour blacke. In her going downe they saw her tayle, which was like the tayle of a porposse, and speckled like a macrell."

The entry for 20th June mentions that "heere we heard beares roar on the ice; and wee saw upon the ice and neare unto it an incredible number of seals."

The ship was now approaching Nova Zembla. The last European visitors to that dreary region had been Barents and Heemskerck, whose trials and adventures have been narrated in a previous chapter; and Hudson seems to have had information about their stay there.<sup>1</sup> On 26th June the land was sighted.

On the beach stood one of those wooden crosses which Barents had seen at different points. Their origin and meaning is, we believe, still a mystery; the cross is a Christian symbol, but it is also used by some heathen tribes and treated with great reverence.

Going ashore the men noticed the footprints of huge bears, besides those of deer and foxes. Herds of walrus were swimming in the calm waters, and one island rock was crowded with their clumsy bodies. The

<sup>1</sup> Barents was before Hudson, but two English navigators were before Barents. Pet and Jackman explored these cold seas in 1580, and a Dutch translation of their journals was found in the wooden house where Barents had wintered. Earlier still, in 1553, the ill-fated Sir Hugh Willoughby had sighted the western coast of Nova Zembla, part of which is called after him. The name Nova Zembla (or Novaia Zemlaia) is, however, a reminder that the Portuguese had penetrated here a century before.

sight was tempting, and Hudson sent the whole of his crew a-hunting, but the herd took fright and slid off into the sea, all escaping save one. The massive head with its gleaming tusks was brought on board, along with a supply of seabirds' eggs. Numbers of white deer were seen, and there appeared to be plenty of herbage for them,—moss and flowers and grass. The drift-ice was still a source of anxiety. Here is an extract which we take from the log-book entry for 2nd July; it gives us some idea of the dangers faced by the crew of this tiny ship and the spirit in which they were met: "At sixe a clocke this morning, came much ice from the southward driving upon us, very fearfull to looke on; but by the mercy of God and His mightie helpe, wee being moored with two anchors ahead with vering out of one cable and heaving home the other, and fending off with beames and sparres, escaped the danger; which labour continued till sixe a clocke in the eevening, and then it was past us, and we rode still and tooke our rest this night."

Hudson has a good word to say about Nova Zembla, which was far less desolate than he had expected it would be; but his disappointment was great at finding no water-way through which he could penetrate to the Eastern Sea.

It seemed strange to the crew as they came homeward to have to "light up" of an evening, for, from the 19th of May to the 27th of July, the never-setting sun

had been their candle day and night. Gravesend was reached on the 26th August.

In March, 1609, Hudson was off once more, this time in the service of the Dutch East India Company. The starting-place was Amsterdam, and the object in view was, as before, the discovery of a North-East Passage.

His previous journey had convinced him that the only hope of such a passage was by the Straits of Waygatz, and this he was not then in a position to attempt.

In May he again found himself sailing past the great bird-haunted headland of the North Cape, in perpetual daylight. But as he drew near Nova Zembla the ice-barriers looked so impenetrable, that the attempt was given up. Failing the North-East, Hudson resolved to try the North-West. Accordingly his ship, the *Half Moon*, was headed westward and southward, and through fog and rain they ran for the Faroe Islands.

Two Englishmen had recently been "hammering at the great North-West Gate"—John Knight in 1606, and Captain George Weymouth, four years earlier. The discoveries of the latter were known to the Hollanders, and Hudson took with him, when he sailed from Amsterdam in 1609, the coast tracings of his brother-voyager. It is not too much to say that Weymouth "lighted Hudson into the Strait," as

one old writer puts it, in the following year. Hudson Strait we call it, but Weymouth had preceded him down this great opening for a long distance.

A south-west ward course brought Hulson and his Hollanders to the already famous fishing-grounds of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and they found a fleet of Frenchmen busily engaged there. A little later they themselves tried their luck with the lines and caught a hundred and eighteen big cod.

By the 4th of August they were as far south as Stage Harbour, Massachusetts, and, a little later, off the South Carolina coast; after which they returned north.

In the midst of a monotonous series of ships' reckonings, plain matter-of-fact entries, which make up the journal about this time, it is quite a relief to come across a genuine bit of sailor superstition, like the following: "This night our cat ranne crying from one side of the ship to the other looking overboard, which made us to wonder; but we saw nothing." This little incident probably loosed a good many tongues on the subject of apparitions and warnings given by dumb creatures, weird tales that could be told with pretty considerable effect on a little lonely ship anchored in a fog.

Early in September the *Half Moon* was off the broken coast-line where now upon the map we find in bold letters the name, New York. The city then was

not even begun; it was owing to the favourable report brought home by Hudson, endorsed by later visitors, that led a band of Dutch adventurers to settle there. From the fort and factory then built, on an island at the mouth of the Hudson River, sprang the modern city with all its wealth and activity.

Hudson stood in, and began to look about him. "A pleasant land to fall with and a pleasant land to see," is the comment in the journal. In the harbour, which is also praised, some good fishing was got, one gigantic ray being hauled up, which took four men to lift it into the boat. Great oak-woods covered part of the country. The Indian tribes who came out to traffic with the visitors seemed the only inhabitants. Some of these were capable of mischief, as a boat's crew found to their cost.

These men had been sent to explore part of an inlet four leagues distant, and they were coming back with good news of the fragrant stretch of field and forest which had delighted them, when they were attacked by two canoes, full of armed natives. Hudson's men defended themselves vigorously, but night closed in and rain began to fall. This put out the matches, and without firearms the crew were in evil plight. Two of their number were wounded; and another, John Colman who had shipped with Hudson before on his first voyage, was shot in the throat with an arrow. All night they rowed to and fro, vainly endeavouring in the

black darkness to find the ship, and it was not till ten o'clock next morning that the poor, weary fellows returned, bringing with them the dead body of their comrade.

It is but fair to say that these North American Indians were by no means unprovoked in their enmity to European ships. The acts of violence done by traders were quite as numerous as the acts of treachery on the part of the natives.<sup>1</sup> Often a peaceful landing-party would get slain, in requital of the wanton cruelties of some boat's crew years before. Among savage races a wrong is remembered, and revenge waited for, year after year; and sometimes it happens that the blow falls upon innocent heads. In the case of Henry Hudson's men, the mistrustful spirit they harboured against the natives was in marked contrast with the frank kindness which their captain preferred to show.

The *Half Moon* then proceeded up the Hudson River. (This river had been discovered previously by the Italian Verazzano in 1524.) The grand scenery must have impressed everyone on board. The Catskill Mountains (hereafter to be inseparably associated with

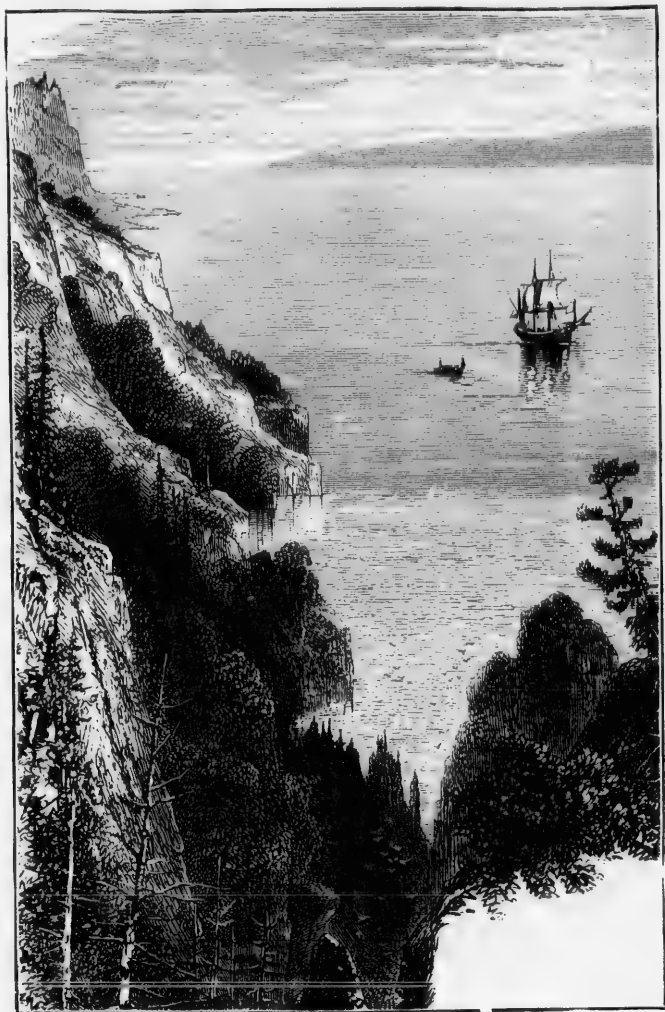
<sup>1</sup> This is frankly admitted often enough. Here is an instance from the journal of the third voyage: "*July 25th.*—In the morning wee manned our sente (boat) with foure muskets and sixe men, and tooke one of their shallops (*i.e.* seized one of the Indian canoes.) Then we manned our boat with twelve men and muskets, and drave the savages from their houses, and tooke the spoyle of them, *as they would have done of us.*" The last sentence is delicious in its self-justification.

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ON THE HUDSON RIVER.





the Dutch-made legend of Rip van Winkle),<sup>1</sup> lift their masses of grey and purple above the climbing woods often in precipices of a thousand feet, sheer from the water's edge; and many of the peaks are three and four times that height.

The *Half Moon* crept up the river by easy stages, until her boat, which had been sent on ahead, brought back word that for heavy craft it was only navigable for a few leagues further. The return journey then commenced. From time to time trafficking took place with the Indians, who brought fruit and maize and tobacco, besides otter and beaver skins, and the like. Friendly intercourse and exchange of hospitalities alternated, as they proceeded, with many sharp affrays; the crew resenting with blows the thievish tricks of the Redskins. On the 4th October the ship "came out of the river, into which we had run so farre." The homeward voyage was uneventful, and Dartmouth was reached early in November.

It would seem that the story of Hudson's successful voyage quickly came to the ears of the English Government. The *Half Moon* was allowed, after a short delay, to continue her voyage to Amsterdam, but her captain was requested to remain and await further orders. Eventually he was commissioned to make another

<sup>1</sup> Those who do not already know the delightful story of Rip van Winkle, and how he came upon the ghosts of Hudson's crew playing nine-pins in a hollow of the mountains, may find it in Washington Irving's *Sketch Book*.

expedition to the North-West, and attempt to complete what John Davis had so nobly begun.

Three English gentlemen came forward to provide the means, and on 17th April, 1610, Hudson went aboard the *Discovery*, and sailed from the Thames on what proved to be his last voyage.

As they neared Iceland, the lurid glare from the fiery summit of Hecla was seen reddening the sky. The men were allowed to go ashore, and found much amusement in the hot springs, which are a natural curiosity of the island; some of them stripped and had "a bath hot enough to scald a fowle."

Then away they sailed into the ice-infested seas about the Greenland Coast, and so, with a westerly course they entered and passed up Hudson Strait, till they rounded Cape Wolstenholme, about the 3rd of August. At this stage our copy of Hudson's journal breaks off abruptly. The fact of so much being missing has an ugly significance, in view of what was about to happen. The missing pages probably contained references to the rebellious spirit of a section of the crew, and if we had them we should most likely be able to trace the events which culminated at last in open mutiny. What we know of the remainder of the voyage is gathered from two other sources.

It seems that already there had been serious murmurings on board. Discontent, and fear of being caught and crushed in the ice, made the men clamour for

return. Hudson refused to entertain such an idea; he was bent on exploring the Strait and the great Bay, which were in future to be called after him. Southward down the east coast of Hudson Bay sailed the little ship, till it had reached the extreme southern corner. Winter set in, and the scarcity of rations began to tell upon the crew, depressed and sullen with what they considered fruitless wandering. Suspicion and mistrust poisoned the hearts of many, and the captain is said to have accused one and another of hiding supplies of food. Thus in unhappy wise the weeks and months went by.

On Saturday, 21st June, the climax came. At night the more headstrong of the disaffected party took matters into their own hands. There was not more than a fortnight's food left. It was resolved that the captain and all the sick men should be put into the ship's boat, and left to fend for themselves. Neither anger nor argument availed. All that the mutineers would agree to was to wait until morning before putting their plan into execution.

"Then," says the old record, "the shallop was haled up to the ship side, and the poore, sicke, and lame men were called upon to get out of their cabbins into the shallop." The carpenter, John King, loyally refused to leave his captain, and followed him into the boat, only requesting that his tool-chest should be given him, which was done. Firearms, food, and a few utensils

were handed down, and the boat was then cut adrift.

And so the brave navigator and his little son, with the stout-hearted carpenter and six helpless seamen, were abandoned to their fate. How long the frail boat managed to survive among the drift-ice of that inhospitable region, we know not. Fancy alone can follow it through those last dreadful days of cold, hunger, and despair. When the top-sails of the receding ship had passed out of sight, all hope vanished too. The end was merely a question of time, and whether it came by daylight, when the bright June sunshine only showed up the dreariness of the scene, or in the darkness of the freezing night, none can tell.

THE END.

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